On the Lotus
Postcards 1898-1931

Edited by Valentin Jeutner

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Digital supplementary materials related to this book, including video clips of the Lotus, additional photographs, and a map showing the locations of postcard authors and recipients, can be accessed at: www.jeutner.com/lotus

Edited by Valentin Jeutner
Cover by Gunilla Albertén & Valentin Jeutner

ISBN 978 91 90023 25 9 (print)
ISBN 978 91 90023 26 6 (electronic)

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Printed in Sweden by Media Tryck, Lund University, 2026, with financial support from the Rune and Lena Lavin Foundation for Legal Research.

Meinen Geschwistern

Anemone, Benedikt, Jonathan

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↑ The grand staircase on the *Lotus* (ca. 1913). From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

Introduction

The S.S. *Lotus* has lived three colourful, consequential, and complicated lives. The first two have ended. The third is still unfolding. The postcards brought together in this book follow the vessel through each of those lives and invite you, dear reader, to become part of the third.

In its first incarnation, the *Lotus* was known as the S.S. *Tonkin*. Her construction began in December 1896 at La Ciotat, the small shipbuilding town east of Marseille, where Messageries Maritimes ('La Compagnie'), then France's largest shipping company, maintained one of its principal yards. The company had commissioned the new steamer for its route between Marseille and the French possessions in the Far East.

The *Tonkin*, named after the French protectorate in what is now northern Vietnam, was launched in La Ciotat on 6 March 1898 and departed from Marseille for her maiden voyage on 18 December of the same year. She measured 142 metres in length and 15.5 metres in width, with a displacement of 9,850 tonnes. Her engines produced 9,600 horsepower and carried her at

speeds of up to 19 knots (ca. 35km/h). By comparison, the RMS *Titanic*, launched little more than a decade later, was nearly twice her length and more than five times her tonnage, yet exceeded the *Tonkin's* top speed by only two knots. Though modest beside the great liners that would soon follow, the *Tonkin* belonged to the same modern world of steam and steel.

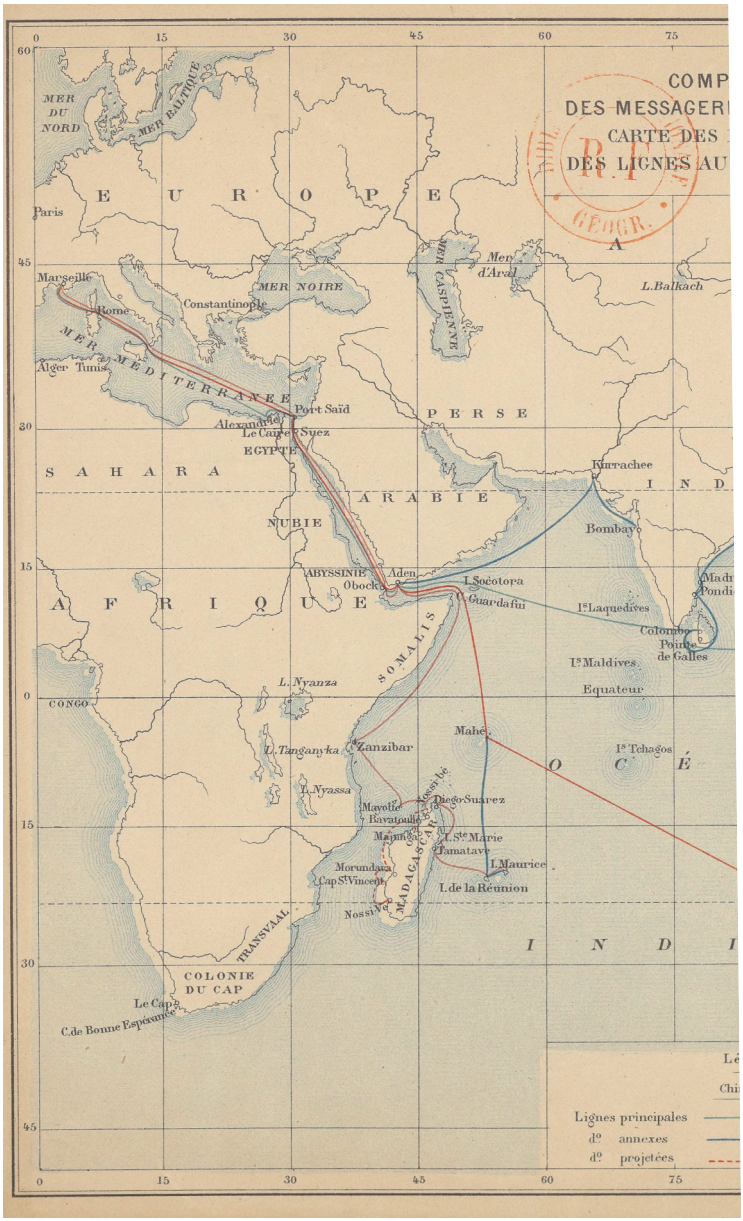
From 1898 until 1912, the *Tonkin* maintained a regular service between Marseille and Yokohama (see Map 1, pp. 4-5). On her route across the Mediterranean, through the Suez Canal, to the great ports of Asia and the Indian Ocean, the *Tonkin* regularly called at Port Said, Djibouti, Aden, Bombay, Colombo, Singapore, Saigon, Hai Phong, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Kobe.

The second life of the *Lotus* began in 1912. Returning to the shipyards of La Ciotat, where she had first been built, the *Tonkin* underwent extensive modifications. Her boilers and funnels were replaced, her passenger accommodations enlarged, and a second promenade deck added above the original superstructure. Emerging from the yard, she was given a new name: S.S. *Lotus*. The change was more than cosmetic. After nearly fifteen years on the long route to the Far East, the ship was assigned to the eastern Mediterranean (see Map 2, pp. 12-13).

↑ The first known photograph of the *Tonkin*, taken in the port of Marseille in April 1899. © Eugène Trutat / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The *Lotus* departed on her first voyage under her new name on 10 January 1913, serving the route to Alexandria, Port Said, Jaffa, Beirut, Tripoli, Smyrna, Thessaloniki, and Constantinople, with departures from Marseille every second Thursday.

If the *Tonkin* had belonged to the vast oceanic world stretching from Europe to East Asia, the *Lotus* entered a different maritime landscape altogether: the crowded and ancient waters of the Levant. The *Lotus* served the ports of the eastern Mediterranean for two decades until, on 29



Map 1: From 1898 until 1912, the *Tonkin* commuted between Marseille and Yokohama (green line). From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

Gravé et imprimé par Erhard Frres, 35bis rue Denfert-Rochereau

February 1932, her second and final corporeal life came to an end when she was sold to an Italian company in Genoa for scrapping.

Before the *Lotus* was scrapped, the ship's third life had already begun. It commenced just before midnight on 2 August 1926, in the waters north of Mytilene, the Greek island now known as Lesbos. There, while steaming towards Constantinople, the *Lotus* collided with the much smaller Turkish cargo vessel *Boz-Kourt*. Torn apart by the impact of the collision, the *Boz-Kourt* sank. Eight Turkish sailors lost their lives. The *Lotus* rescued the survivors and carried them onward to Constantinople. Some of the survivors's statements about the collision recorded upon reaching Turkey are included on pp. 277-289.

What followed transformed a maritime accident into the foundational case of modern international law. Upon arrival in Constantinople, Turkish authorities arrested the captain of the *Boz-Kourt*, Hasan Bey, as well as the French officer on watch aboard the *Lotus* at the moment of the collision, Jan Demons. France protested, arguing that the collision had occurred on the high seas and that only France, as the state whose flag the *Lotus* was flying, possessed the right to try the French officer. Turkey disagreed. The dispute was referred to the newly established Permanent Court of

↑ The *Lotus* in the port of Alexandria (1913). From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

International Justice in The Hague, the predecessor of today's International Court of Justice. In its judgment of 7 September 1927, the Court decided in Turkey's favour. It held that because no rule of international law prohibited Turkey from exercising jurisdiction in the case, Turkey was free to do so. From that decision emerged what became known as the *Lotus Principle*: the idea that states are permitted to do anything international law does not prohibit.

The *Lotus Principle* kept the *Lotus* alive long after the ship itself was scrapped in 1932 and introduced me to the ship as a law student in 2009.

- Marseille - Hôtel des Messageries Maritimes (Place Sadi Carnot)
REGINA "HOTEL
REGINA HOTEL RESTAURANT
OXYGENEE CUSENIER
CACA VAN HOUT

↑ Hôtel des Messageries Maritimes, Marseille (ca. 1914). From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

Having encountered the *Lotus Principle* as a student, it took me a few years to discover the rich history of the ship and her passengers. For lawyers, the *Lotus* is usually no more than the trigger for the legal dispute between France and Turkey. In textbooks and classrooms, the circumstances giving rise to the collision may matter but not the story of the *Lotus* herself.

Moreover, as one can read on many of the postcards featured in this book, the *Lotus* was technically a *paquebot* - a packet boat. To me, an uninformed

reader, the term suggested that the principal mission of the *Lotus* was to transport mail and cargo rather than passengers. The *Lotus* did carry mail, but she was, above all, a passenger ship. In addition to 13 officers and a crew of 191, the *Tonkin* could accommodate 348 passengers: 185 in first class, 86 in second, and 77 in third. Reflecting the growing importance of passenger travel, after the *Tonkin's* refurbishment in 1912, the total number of passengers on the *Lotus* increased to 394, divided between 192 in first class, 110 in second, and 92 in third (see the deck plan of the *Lotus* on pp. 102-103).

Across the decades and the three classes, the passengers who travelled aboard the *Lotus* were remarkably diverse: pilgrims and merchants, diplomats and journalists, soldiers and archaeologists, sex workers and migrants, political exiles and tourists, royals and revolutionaries. Some would have arrived in Marseille by train from other parts of Europe on their way home or en route to work overseas. Passengers with time to spare before departure often stayed at the Hôtel des Messageries Maritimes on Place Sadi Carnot, near the docks of Marseille's new port - the same hotel where the German philosopher Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) experimented with and authored his essay about taking hashish in 1928.

The postcards reproduced in this book preserve fragments of journeys across the Mediterranean and beyond. Many messages were written in haste, announcing an imminent arrival in Marseille or unexpected delays (p. 127). They relay, amongst many other things, condolences (p. 67), reports of people embroiled in personal conflicts (p. 117), anxiety over unanswered letters (p. 185), and countless expressions of love and affection (see, e.g., pp. 31, 33, 69, 112, 209, 231, 315).

Like many modern text messages, most were not intended to have a lasting existence. Others were clearly meant to be preserved as souvenirs by their authors or their recipients. The author of the card on p. 313, for example, recorded the dates of their journey aboard the *Lotus* before placing the card in an album. The author of the card on p. 99 mentions the intention to display it at home, and the glue marks still visible on the card itself suggest that they in fact did so.

Some authors expected to reunite with the recipients of their cards very soon: 'next Wednesday' (p. 89) or 'in twenty days' (p. 113). Others assumed they would remain separated for much longer periods of time, in one case for more than two years (p. 31). Certain passengers travelled aboard the *Lotus* so frequently that the ship became part of the routine vocabulary of their lives. On

p. 143, the writer casually refers to the ship simply as 'L.' Others were travelling aboard for the first time and described the *Lotus* with fascination as a 'famous ship' (p. 131), a 'beautiful ship' (p. 165), or a vessel 'as big as a castle' (p. 317). Some attempted to help their recipients imagine life aboard by marking the location of their cabin on the postcard (pp. 55, 169).

Reading these messages today may feel strangely intimate. But it is important to remember that postcards, much like tweets or Facebook posts, were never private documents. They travelled openly through many hands before reaching their destination. What survives in them is what travellers were prepared for others to see and read. The messages were of course addressed to specific recipients, but the group of potential readers was much larger. As the contemporary German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk observed, authors cannot foresee who will read their writings: 'It is one of the rules of the game of literate culture that the senders cannot know in advance who their eventual recipients might be.' The same is true of postcards sent from the decks of the *Lotus*. They connect not only the known authors and addressees but also induct us, today's readers, into the conversations that commenced more than a century ago.

Map 2: From 1913 until 1931, the *Lotus* circulated between Marseille and the eastern Mediterranean (red line). From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

Gravé et imprimé par Erhard Frres, 35bis, rue Denfert-Rochereau.

Reading and engaging with the postcards collected in this book is meaningful on its own terms. But the messages also reveal four things in particular: the geographical scope of the ship's routes, the passage of time, the texture of movement, and the varying intensity with which larger historical events entered the lives of ordinary people.

First, the postcards reveal the extraordinary geographical scope of the *Lotus* and of the worlds the ship connected. Written aboard the ship, postcards travelled onward to Denmark (p. 71), Austria (p. 87), Algeria (p. 65), France (p. 69), Greece (p. 349), Hungary (p. 207), Switzerland (p. 319), Syria (p. 183), Wales (p. 363), and even the United States of America (p. 353). The journeys described on the cards stretched from Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Bordeaux, and Toulon to Port Said, Alexandria, Beirut, Damascus, Constantinople, Haiphong, Saigon, Singapore, Djibouti, Dakar, and Nanning. Other cards mention crossings through the Strait of Messina, views of Corsica and Sicily, eruptions of Stromboli and Vesuvius, storms in the Gulf of Lion, or stops in Malta, Bizerte, Jaffa, Cairo, and Piraeus. The *Lotus* and her passengers were never simply in one place, but always connected to persons in cities, towns, and countries far beyond the horizon visible from the ship itself.

↑ Passengers on the *Lotus* in Marseille (ca. 1913). From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

Second, by inviting us into the geopolitical world of the early twentieth century, the postcards help us get a sense of the passage of time. Between the *Tonkin's* maiden voyage in 1898 and the scrapping of the *Lotus* in 1932, the political landscape through which the ship travelled changed dramatically. The Ottoman, Russian, German, and Austro-Hungarian Empires collapsed. The Qing dynasty fell in China. New states emerged across Europe while colonial rule expanded in Africa and the Middle East. The First World War redrew borders across the Mediterranean and beyond, and the League of Nations attempted to construct a new international order from the ruins

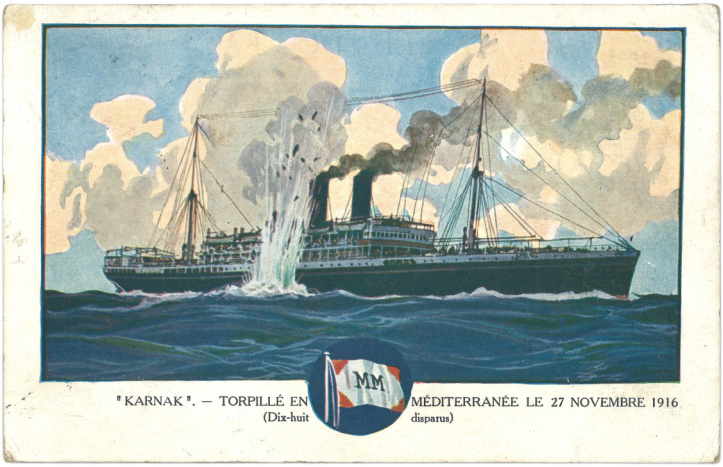
of the old. Today, Constantinople is Istanbul; Saigon is Ho Chi Minh City; Haiphong and Cochinchina are integral parts of independent Vietnam; Jaffa, once Mandatory Palestine's largest and most important port, is now a part of the Israeli city of Tel Aviv. In the postcards, Damascus and Beirut appear as cities administered by France; today, they are the capitals of Syria and Lebanon. Constantine and Bizerte likewise formed part of the French colonial empire in North Africa and are now cities in Algeria and Tunisia.

The geopolitical transformations over the last century have been so profound that the journey of the *Lotus* around the Mediterranean could no longer be undertaken today. While the eastern Mediterranean could be traversed with comparative ease in the 1920s, it is now a fractured landscape of fortified borders, contested territories and conflict. In this sense, the postcards do not merely record movement through space. They also record movement through time. They preserve traces of political orders, colonial structures, empires, borders, and cities that have long since changed their names or disappeared.

Third, the cards preserve the texture of movement itself. They record the experience of travelling slowly through the maritime world of the early twentieth century, of watching coastlines emerge

at dawn, of waiting for reunions, of crossing borders, of leaving home, or attempting to return to it. One postcard captures the texture of movement quite literally: the writer apologises for the near illegibility of the handwriting because the ship is rolling heavily at sea. The writer's scratchy lines on the card make visible the physical movement of the *Lotus* herself (p. 267).

Finally, the postcards reveal what the biographies of statesmen and other leaders rarely disclose: the uneven intensity with which historical developments affect the lives of ordinary people. As Sebastian Haffner (1907-1999), a German journalist and writer, observed, some historical events pass over lives 'like a cloud over a lake,' leaving only a fleeting shadow, while others 'whip up the lake as in a thunderstorm,' altering it completely. The postcards reproduced here capture those differences in intensity unusually well. Some barely register the major political events of the age. Others reveal lives disrupted by war, migration, separation, or political upheaval. Several cards were written by soldiers during the First World War (p. 269). One card even depicts the cannon mounted on the *Lotus* during the war (p. 137) and refers explicitly to the danger of being torpedoed. The danger was real. In late 1916, a German submarine sunk the *Karnak*, a sister ship of the *Lotus*. In 1917, while sailing under Japanese



↑ The *Karnak*, a sister ship of the Lotus, was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine on 27 November 1916. From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

destroyer escort south of Sardinia, the *Lotus* herself narrowly escaped a German attack when rescuing survivors from the torpedoed liner *Mooltan*. A few months later, another torpedo narrowly missed the *Lotus* north of Benghazi. Postcards written by soldiers after the war reflect France's occupation of large parts of the Levant (p. 199), while the card on p. 273 hints at strained post-war relations between France and Turkey by describing a Turkish police raid aboard the *Lotus* in April 1926.

Taken together, the postcards preserve fragments of how ordinary individuals experienced the transformations of the early twentieth century while moving through the world aboard the *Lotus*.

Although the postcards help us gain an understanding of the lives of comparatively ordinary *Lotus* passengers, they provide only faint glimpses into the lives of two other groups aboard the ship: those whose privilege ensured that their journeys entered the public record, and those who were extraordinarily underprivileged and left behind few written traces. Only occasionally do we find subtle hints on the postcards to the presence of both groups aboard the ship.

With respect to the group of the privileged, the authors of the postcard on p. 127, for example, inform their relatives that they continue their holidays in Port Said 'at the princess' expense,' hinting at worlds of first-class travel and elite patronage that otherwise remain largely invisible in the postcards. Among these privileged passengers were several figures who shaped politics, philosophy, and art beyond the world of the *Lotus*.

Two particularly consequential encounters on the *Lotus* took place in 1905 and 1924. The first contributed to the Chinese Revolution. The second influenced the *Star Wars* saga.

In the summer of 1905, Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), the revolutionary who would become the founding father of modern China, travelled on the *Tonkin* from Marseille to Yokohama. On board

the ship, he met the businessman Zhang Renjie (1877-1950), who became one of Sun's closest political allies. Zhang's financial support helped Sun to fund the activities that eventually contributed to the overthrow of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912.

Almost two decades later, in 1924, the *Lotus* became the site of a second consequential encounter: the Indian philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) met the American scholar Joseph Campbell (1904-1987) aboard the ship. Campbell would later become one of the twentieth century's most influential writers on mythology and religion. His book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* introduced the concept of the 'monomyth,' or the hero's journey - a narrative pattern found in myths across cultures. This idea had a profound impact on modern storytelling, particularly in film. George Lucas, the creator of *Star Wars*, cited Campbell's work as a major inspiration for the structure and themes of the saga. As a result, Campbell gained widespread recognition beyond academic circles and became a significant figure in popular culture. Campbell himself attributed his fascination with Asian philosophy and comparative mythology to his encounter with Krishnamurti aboard the *Lotus*.

While no trace of either encounter survives in the postcards, they do preserve glimpses of one of the first notable passengers aboard the *Tonkin*: the poet Paul-Jean Toulet (1867-1920). Toulet's works include poems, novels, and diaries composed largely of literary observations, gossip, and travel impressions. Toulet is known for inventing an ABBA verse form later used in his *Contrerimes* (1921). He also developed the curious habit of sending postcards and letters to himself from the ports he visited. Excerpts of a letter by Toulet to himself are reproduced in this volume (pp. 43-45).

In February 1912, shortly before the *Tonkin* became the *Lotus*, Prince Wilhelm of Sweden, Duke of Södermanland (1884-1965), and his wife, Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna of Russia (1890-1958), travelled from Saigon to Singapore aboard the ship. None of Maria Pavlovna's numerous memoirs and travel diaries mention the *Tonkin*. But Prince Wilhelm's description of the couple's departure from Saigon aboard the ship is reproduced in this book (pp. 93-95).

In 1920, French president Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929), who led France during the final years of the First World War, crossed the Mediterranean aboard the *Lotus* shortly after leaving office. No written account of Clemenceau's voyage aboard the ship survives. But since Clemenceau's

departure occasioned the presence of the press, the journey resulted in the only two known film recordings of the *Lotus*. Links to these recordings can be found on pp. 158-159.

Also included in this book is a vivid account of the journey of another head of state aboard the *Lotus*: Reza Shah Pahlavi (1878-1944). Reza Shah Pahlavi, Shah and Prime Minister of Iran, travelled aboard the ship from Beirut to Marseille in December 1923. No film recording or photos of the Shah's time aboard the ship appear to exist but one passenger's detailed description of the Shah's journey aboard the *Lotus* is reproduced on pp. 225-229.

The most prolific writer belonging to the privileged category of passengers was the Dutch-Canadian journalist Pierre van Paassen (1895-1968), who claimed to have travelled aboard the *Lotus* numerous times during the 1920s. He left detailed accounts of his journeys aboard the ship and even suggested that the *Lotus* might have remained in operation long after it was supposedly scrapped in 1932. Since van Paassen was later revealed to have plagiarised and invented many of his stories, his claims provide only fragile grounds for believing that the *Lotus* might still be around. An excerpt of one of van Paassen's alleged journeys aboard the *Lotus* is included in this book (pp. 294-311).

During the second half of the 1920s in particular, the *Lotus* carried archaeologists from America and Europe to excavation sites in the Middle East. Among them was the American priest and archeologist Léon Legrain (1865-1939), who travelled aboard the *Lotus* in October 1924. Legrain was later renowned for his work at Ur in present-day Iraq. Excerpts from his account of departing Marseille are reproduced on pp. 253-257. In 1931, the British archaeologist Olga Tufnell (1905-1985) travelled on the *Lotus*. Tufnell is well-known for her excavations at Lachish in present-day Israel and for her interest in Palestinian cultural life. A letter she wrote aboard the ship to her parents in 1931 is reproduced on pp. 358-361. On one of the ship's very last voyages, Nina and Wassily Kandinsky travelled aboard the *Lotus* to Egypt. No written account survives, but more than 70 photographs document the journey. You can find some of them by scanning the QR code on p. 24.

The unusually rich written traces left behind by such privileged passengers stand in sharp contrast to the fragmentary glimpses we possess of a second group of people aboard the ship who appear, if at all, only indirectly or in passing in the postcard messages written by passengers. The author of the postcard on p. 205, for example, refers to a strike that disrupted travel and alerts attentive readers

↑ In 1931, the painter and art theorist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) travelled aboard the *Lotus* with his wife, Nina (1899-1980), to Egypt. They are pictured here on the *Lotus* in the port of Naples on 3 September 1931. © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn / Fonds.

Some of the more than 70 photographs which document the trip can be accessed online by scanning the QR code.

to the presence of workers in the engine rooms labouring under precarious and often unsafe conditions. Indeed, the lives of the postcard writers depended upon a vast and largely invisible workforce that kept the ship in motion. On the eve of the First World War, nearly half of the employees of Messageries Maritimes, the company operating the *Lotus*, were French colonial subjects and other non-European workers, often recruited in ports such as Aden, Colombo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Saigon, and Haiphong: Somali coal heavers, Chinese engine room workers, Indian stokers, Indochinese deckhands and service workers. Underpaid, racially segregated, and frequently relegated to the literal cargo hold of empire (cf. p. 251), these workers were the human machinery that sustained steamship travel.

Their experiences and stories rarely appear in official histories except during moments of disruption. In 1899, for example, Somali engine room workers aboard the *Tonkin* mutinied near Port Said after learning that their crew foreman would be dismissed in Djibouti. In 1910, Chinese and Indochinese crew members staged a walkout in Singapore after officers attempted to confiscate the songbirds they kept and traded aboard the ship. In June 1917, two Chinese workers, referred to only by their employee numbers (No. 11985 and No. 11088), reportedly fell or jumped overboard

three days apart. Whether or not they jumped and died voluntarily, the captain was unable or unwilling to determine.

It might be tempting to think of the *Lotus* as a self-contained, floating microcosm, but in reality, the polished decks of this imperial passenger liner reflected and embodied the same hierarchies and tensions found on *terra firma*. The few textual references to the plight of members of the workforce aboard the *Lotus* can be found in the voyage reports and logbooks that I am currently preparing for publication. If we wish to truly understand the world reflected in these postcards, we must keep in mind not only those who wrote them, but also those who kept afloat the boat on which the postcard authors travelled.

Another group of people, largely - though not entirely - absent from the postcard messages are sex workers in certain Mediterranean ports and onboard the *Lotus* herself. The postcard on p. 41 refers to Marseille's red light district, for example, and the postcard on p. 231 can be read as containing a reference to the presence of sex workers on the *Lotus* herself. By the 1920s, Mediterranean steamship routes had become entangled with efforts to police prostitution and trafficking across borders. Officers of the International Bureau for the Suppression of the

Traffic in Women and Children complained to Messageries Maritimes, the French authorities on the mainland, and to the League of Nations, that traffickers and sex workers repeatedly boarded the *Lotus* with the complicity of crew members. Excerpts of the report of the International Bureau about the *Lotus* and of statements provided by French women trafficked on the ship can be found on pp. 247-249, 325-327. To follow the traces of the *Lotus* means looking beyond the postcard messages themselves, toward the wider human and political worlds through which the ship moved.

Today, the ship itself no longer exists. Nearly a century ago, her steel was broken apart in Genoa. Yet her name continues to travel through lecture halls, courtrooms, textbooks, and debates about the limits of state power and the nature of international law itself. Alongside that legal afterlife survives another one: a human archive preserved in paper, ink, memory, and image. That is why the third life of the *Lotus* never truly ended. This book, and the postcards collected within it, and you, dear reader, are now part of that continuing voyage.

↑ The *Lotus* at sea (ca. 1922). From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

On the Lotus

Postcards & Letters

Messageries Maritimes. — *Tonkin.*

CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance

Adresse

Mme Pierre Grain
16 rue Gimelli
Toulon.

On the Tonkin 1900

Mrs. Pierre Genin
16 Rue Gimelli
Toulon

Little sister, my heart is a little heavy at leaving you all to go so far away, but I am strong and I wanted to go away happy. I am thinking of you a lot. Do not be too sad. In two years I will have so many things to tell you that I will be forced to stay with you for years.

Give my love to your children.

Love to you.

Nice 3/1/1901

Mon cher Marquis

Je suis heureux de t'annoncer mon arrivé à Paris demain soir. Je me promets d'aller me Léon Cogniet samedi dans l'après midi. pour te faire de vive voix ainsi que à Comte Marie mes affectueux souhaits de bonne et heureuse année. Je suis à Nice depuis le 27 Décembre et chayé dorloté comme un coq en pâte, par Oncle Roland et Comte Marie. Quant à mon voyage en Egypte et l'Italie j'en ai été enchanté; Naples Rome m'ont particulièrement ébloui.

A bientôt mes amitiés à toi et à Comte Marie. Ton cousin dévoué

Edmond Bureau

Nice 3 January 1901

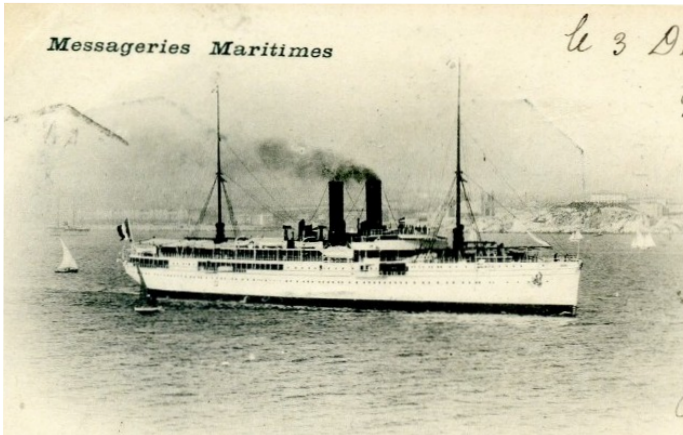
Miss Marguerite Bureau
10 Rue Léon Cogniet
Paris

Dear Margot,

I am happy to announce my arrival in Paris tomorrow evening. I promise I will stop by Rue Léon Cogniet on Saturday afternoon to give you my best wishes, and those of Aunt Marie as well, for a happy new year. I have been in Nice since December 27 and have been pampered and doted on by Uncle Roland and Aunt Marie. I loved my trip to Egypt and Italy, I was enchanted. Naples and Rome in particular took my breath away.

See you soon. I send you my love, and that of Aunt Marie. Your devoted cousin, Edmond Bureau.

Uncle and Aunt Marie send their kisses to everyone.



– A bord du TONKIN –

le 3 Décembre 1901 9h du matin

Mon cher Pierre,

Voici bateau dont vous voyez ici la mince et élégante silhouette traverse en ce moment le détroit de Messine.

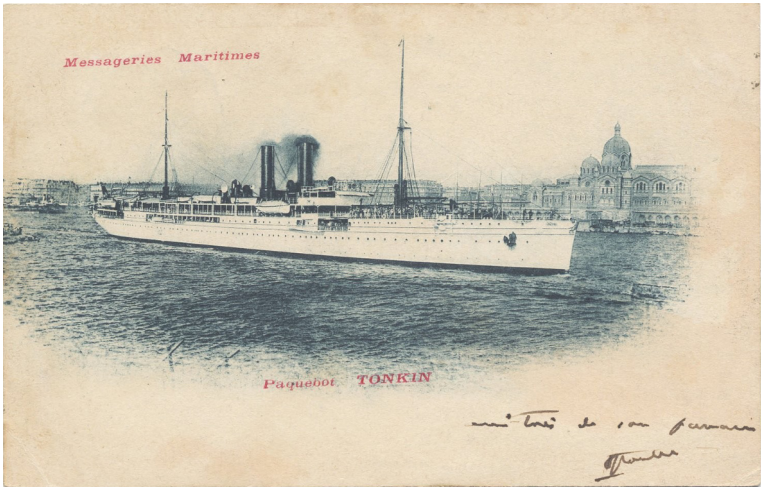
C'est un merveilleux spectacle que ces côtes de Sicile et de l'Italie éclairés par tous les splendeurs du soleil levant: les yeux ne peuvent se lasser d'admirer. Cependant la beauté du panorama ne me fait point oublier notre cher Pierre et ses habitants: je voulais vous en donner un témoignage. S.M.

On the Tonkin 3 December 1901

My dear Pierre,

My ship, whose image and elegant silhouette you can see here, is, at this very moment, crossing the Strait of Messina. What a breath-taking spectacle it is, seeing the shores of Sicily and Italy illuminated by the splendour of the rising sun: the eyes could never grow tired of admiring this view. Nevertheless, the beauty of this panorama could never make me forget our beloved France and its inhabitants. I simply wanted to bear witness to this beauty.

S.M.

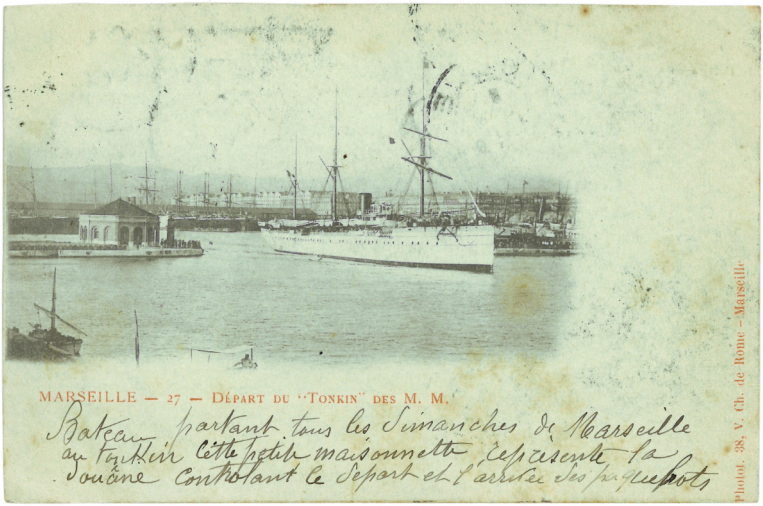

Messageries Maritimes
Paquebot TONKIN

1902
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
CARTE POSTALE
Ce côté est exclusivement réservé à l'adresse
PHOTOTYPIE
DALMOUTH
MARSEILLE
Monsieur Pierre S. de la Blanchetais
18 rue Porte Dijeaux
à Bordeaux

On the Tonkin 1902

Mr. Pierre de la Blanchetais
18 rue Porte Dijeaux
Bordeaux

My best wishes, from your godfather.



MARSEILLE — 27 — DÉPART DU "TONKIN" DES M. M.

Bateau partant tous les Samedis de Marseille
au Tonkin Cette petite maisonnette représente la
douane contrôlant le départ et l'arrivée des paquebots

Photot. 38, V. Ch. de Rome – Marseille

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

CARTE POSTALE

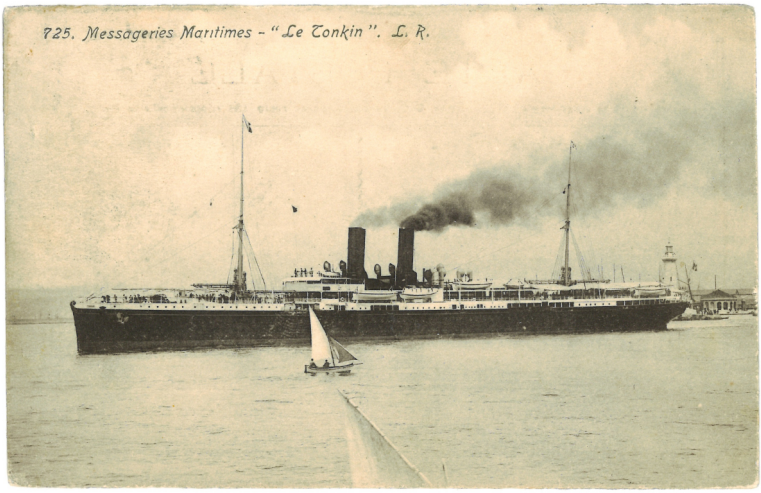
Ce côté est exclusivement réservé à l'adresse

Monsieur Marcel Loden
Lycéen
3 Rue du Plât 3
Lille (Nord)

Marseille 4 October 1902

Mr. Marcel Hoden
High school student
3 Rue du Plât
Lille (Nord)

Boat leaving every Sunday from Marseille to Tonkin. This small house represents the customs office controlling the departure and arrival of liners.


725. Messageries Maritimes - "Le Tonkin". L. R.

CARTE POSTA
CORRESPONDANCE
Mlle Madeleine Chagnet
Le Passage Benoît
Lyon (Croix-Rousse)
Rhône

Marseille 26 April 1903

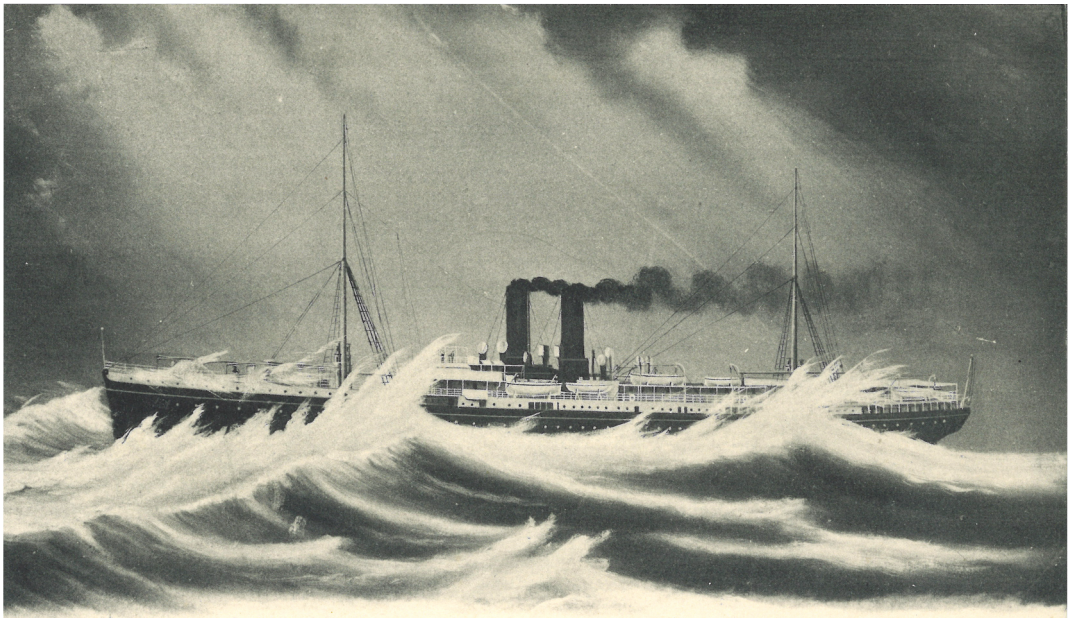
Miss Madeleine Cheynet
4 Passage Benoît
Lyon (Croix-Rousse)
Rhône

My dear Madeleine,

Tell Father and Mother that I thank them for their money, which enabled me to make the trip from Marseille today, Sunday, April 26. There I visited the ports, the liner "Tonkin" bound for Cochinchina, the Château d'If. The day before, by misfortune, I had a bad toothache, so I did not go up to Notre-Dame de la Garde. It was too windy for my teeth. The sea was pretty rough, and on the If service our boat was pretty shaken around. As for Marseille, it is no match for Lyon. The famous Canebière is the street where people shag.

A big hug to you all,

René



1084. Messageries Maritimes - Tonkin, par grosse mer - EL.

On the Tonkin 23 May 1903

You will find it odd, my dear Paul, perhaps even ridiculous, that I should be writing to you myself. But I want you to enjoy a little of this delightful stationery that Rouget gave me in Hanoi. Besides, this correspondence, as they say, is not intended for publication, unless posterity should intervene.

Yet do you really think posterity will ever concern itself with you or me? If one believed that, it would be worth cultivating a certain pose. How would you like to be seen by it?

As for me: sharp and refined like a dentist's instrument, concealing a vast reserve of tenderness (eight metres deep at least, which is more than at Canton) beneath the seaweed of irony; loved by women, feared by men; and ending, in an ivory tower, a life of worldly and mysterious passions sufficient to astonish Marcel Prévost. Even my concierge would be a duchess fallen on hard times; and as for my valet, he would come from the Académie française, of the Broglie variety, I assure you. Why are you laughing?

There is a good soul beneath it all, nevertheless; I shall be exactly as I say.

We caught sight of Crete yesterday. It seemed to me deserted and historical, marked here and there by white patches that were glaciers. Do you ever think of all the nonsense Monsieur Bérard writes about the divine *Odyssey*? He is like those pedants who insist on discovering commercial trade routes in *Sinbad the Sailor*.

As for me, this whole Greek Mediterranean never brings to mind anything but Homer's lithe, sunburnt Ulysses… and a few delicious lines of Racine. Where the Romantics saw only something decorative and grotesquely historical, I seem to hear the gentlest heartbeats of heroic love. Ah, the conquered pride of Phaedra, those beautiful arms she longs to throw around the young man's neck, and that whole body of divine lineage trembling in unison with the sandals of the inhuman one!

Farewell. You bore me; and if you wish to return the compliment, read Fauchois's *Louis XVII*. A wretched revolutionary tragedy. Ponsard once celebrated me in his day... and so forth. Ah! There, at least, you will never find a pulse or a heart beating beneath your hand. The best thing that school ever produced was *the daughter of Madame Angot*. Do you remember that lady who used to sing it to please you in Carresse's salons?

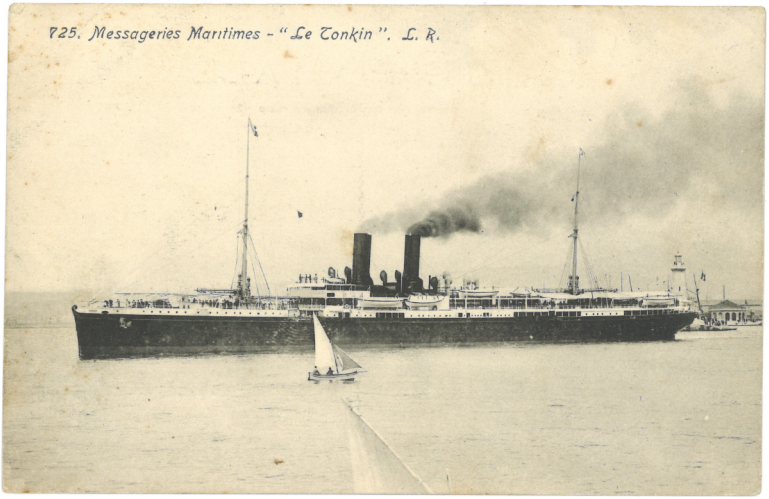
What a fool you were, and was it really necessary that she herself, jealous, should warn you that you too were pleasing to that ardent young girl, who seemed a surviving fragment of the eighteenth century, forgotten among us, descended from those amorous foremothers once celebrated by kings? One day she gave you a rose 'to keep,' and when she left you returned it to her, whereupon she flushed red with vexation.

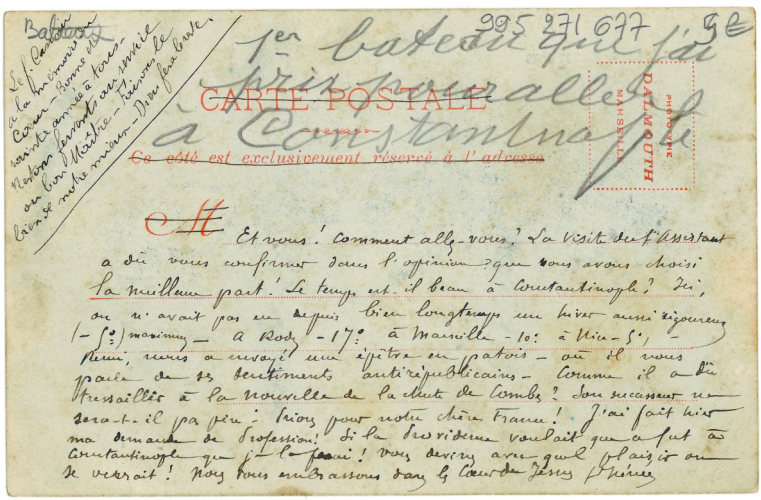
Ah, little Paul! Little Paul! I can still hear her calling your name in her foreign accent. When someone gives you a rose to keep, one keeps it, you poetic simpleton, and sees to it that her cousin has business elsewhere in the house. Yes, little Paul, you were greatly admired then. And why is there nothing left of it now except precisely what you lacked in those days of beautiful shaded gardens: the art of making use of it?

The lovely drooping blossoms of the magnolia, so white in the evening shade, still bloom just the same; but tomorrow you will be thirty six years old.

Yours, Paul-Jean

Source: Paul-Jean Toulet, *Journal et Voyages* (Le Divan 1955) 112-114.


725. Messageries Maritimes - "Le Tonkin". L. R.


CARTE POSTALE
Ce côté est exclusivement réservé à l'adresse
DALMOUTH
MARSEILLE

46

On the Tonkin January 1905

1st boat I took to Constantinople.

Happy and holy New Year to all. Let us remain fervent in the service of the good Master. Let us do good as best we can, God will do the rest.

And you! How are you doing? The 1st assistant's visit must have confirmed your opinion that we chose the best part! Is the weather good in Constantinople? Here, we have not had such a harsh winter in a long time (-5° maximum). In Rodez, -17°; in Marseille, -10°; in Nice, -5°. Rémi has sent you a letter in dialect in which he talks about his anti-Republican feelings. How he must have shuddered at the news of Combes' downfall! Will his successor not be worse? Let us pray for our beloved France! Yesterday I submitted my application for the position! If the Presidency wants me to do it in Constantinople, I will do it! You can imagine what a pleasure it would be to see you! We send you our love from the heart of Jesus.

Pleine Mer. le 23-2-05
MESSAGERIES MARITIMES
10 CENTIMES
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
s.s. Tonkin
Gravures excellentes. — Pensant vs. faire plaisir Ma Chère Mad. Vve
vous envoie le paquebot qui emporte Loin de France votre
Bons baisers affectueux. G. a mon adresse Chinoise. —

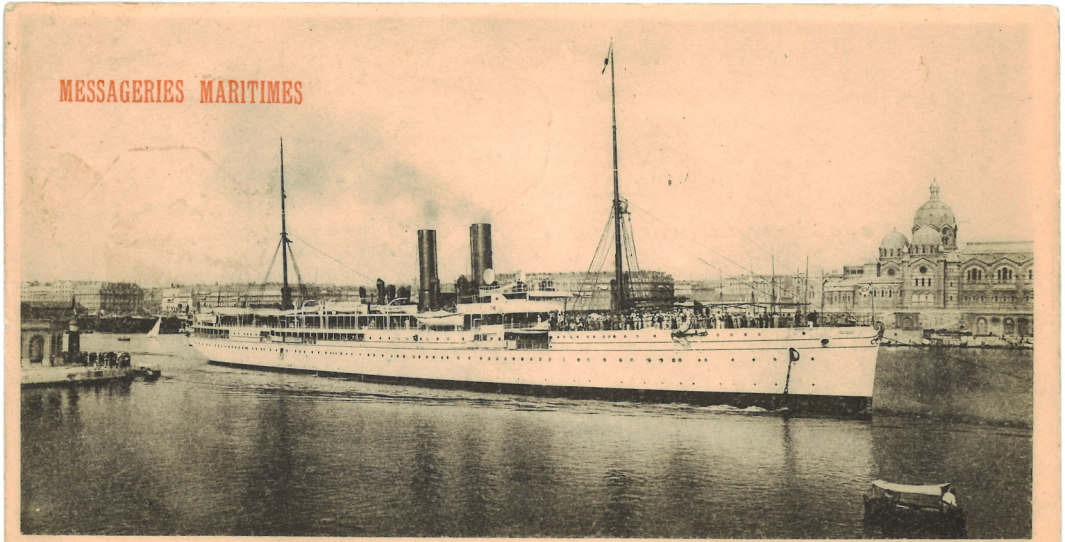
On the Tonkin 2 February 1905

Miss Lydia Jolivet
Montlieu
Charente-Inférieure

Excellent journey. In the hope of making you happy, my dear lady, I am sending you the ship that is taking your dear Fleurette far from France.

My warmest wishes.

Reply at my Chinese address.



s.s. Tonkin

Mer Rouge - 28 fév. 1905,

142 mètres de long

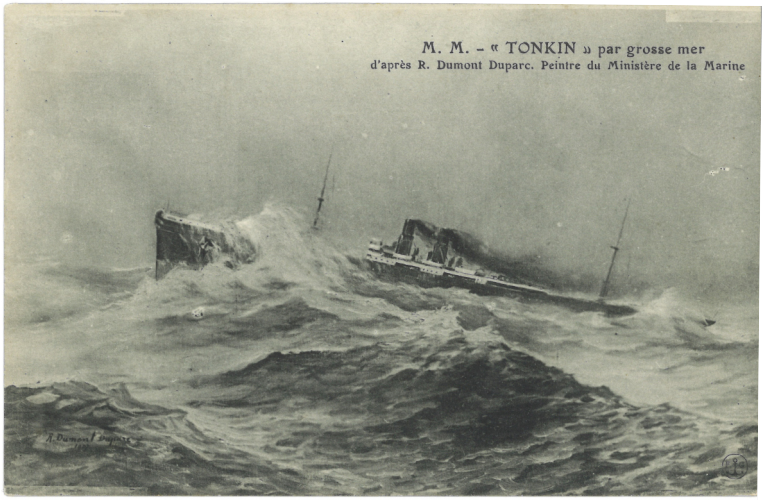
Mon bateau - Tu sais est loin déjà !!

Mr

Red Sea 28 February 1905

Miss R. Le Breton
2 Carrefour de la Croix Rouge
Paris
France

142 metres long, my ship - Paris is so far away already!


M. M. – « TONKIN » par grosse mer
d'après R. Dumont Duparc. Peintre du Ministère de la Marine

CARTE POSTALE
La Correspondance au recto n'est pas acceptée par tous les Pays Etrangers. (Se
CORRESPONDANCE

Bordeaux 18 August 1905

Mr. Joseph Fourteau, Baker
Lannes
Lot-et-Garonne

Dear parents,

The trip was excellent from Lannes to Bordeaux. We saw our ship - it is magnificent. That being said, we could not help feeling a certain degree of emotion. We will need courage, which I am sure we are not lacking, but I hope you are proud of me as we depart.

My warm wishes to everyone.

Tonkin

L'endroit ou nous a cette croix a
l'avant et le Poste des officiers ou
j'habitais a Bord.

Marseille 5 September 1905

Miss Marianne Foulboux
Saint-Germain-des-Fossés
Allier

The spot that I have marked with an X on the picture above is the cabin where I lived while aboard.

A Marie Le-Cadet
à l'arrière du Tonkin, ils voguent vers le Tonkin
vos deux petits que vous aimez bien
4-4 Février 1906-V Philippe

On the Tonkin 4 February 1906

Marie Le Cadet

At the rear of the Tonkin. They sail towards Tonkin, your two little ones who love you dearly.

A bord du Tonkin" — Port-Saïd, le 9 février 1906.

Chers amis

Nous sommes arrivés à Port-Saïd, première étape du voyage avec 12 h de retard que nous a occasionné un mauvais temps constant depuis Marseille. Juliette a été bien souffrante; depuis hier elle s'est remise, à présent tout va bien et la jeune Monique vous envoie avec la photo de

la cabine qui l'a transportée, un bon souvenir de l'expédition de ses parents et sa sincère affection.

Bien cordialement à vous

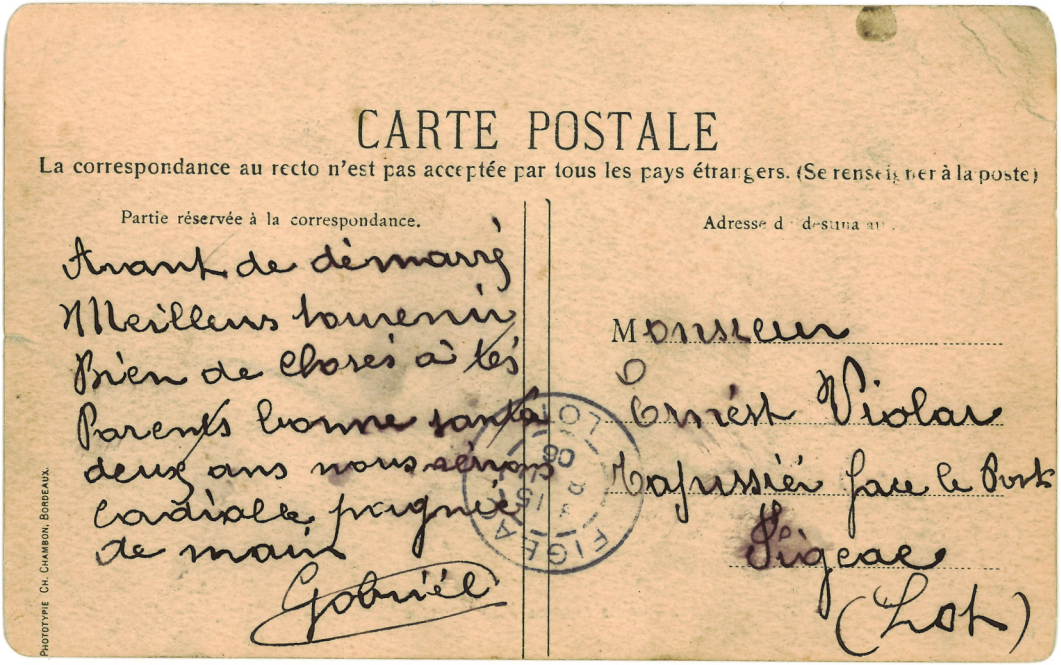
J. de Chavanay

Port Said 9 February 1906

Mrs. and Mr. Jophin
64 Rue St. Lazare
Paris

We arrived in Port Saïd, the first stage of our journey, with 12 hours of delay that was caused by the continuous bad weather since Marseille. Juliette was quite ill; she has been resting since yesterday. At the moment, everything is going well. I am sending you a photo of the ship that is bringing us back, a good souvenir. My greetings to everyone.

Best wishes to all.



CARTE POSTALE

La correspondance au recto n'est pas acceptée par tous les pays étrangers. (Se renseigner à la poste)

Partie réservée à la correspondance.

Avant de démarrer
Meilleurs souvenirs
Bien de choses à tes
Parents bonne santé
deux ans nous serons
cordiales poignées
de main
Gabriele

Adresse de destination

Monsieur
Ernest Viola
Maussier par le Bourg
Pigeac
(Lot)

FIGEAC 20 JUIL 08

PHOTOTYPIE CH. CHAMBON, BORDEAUX.

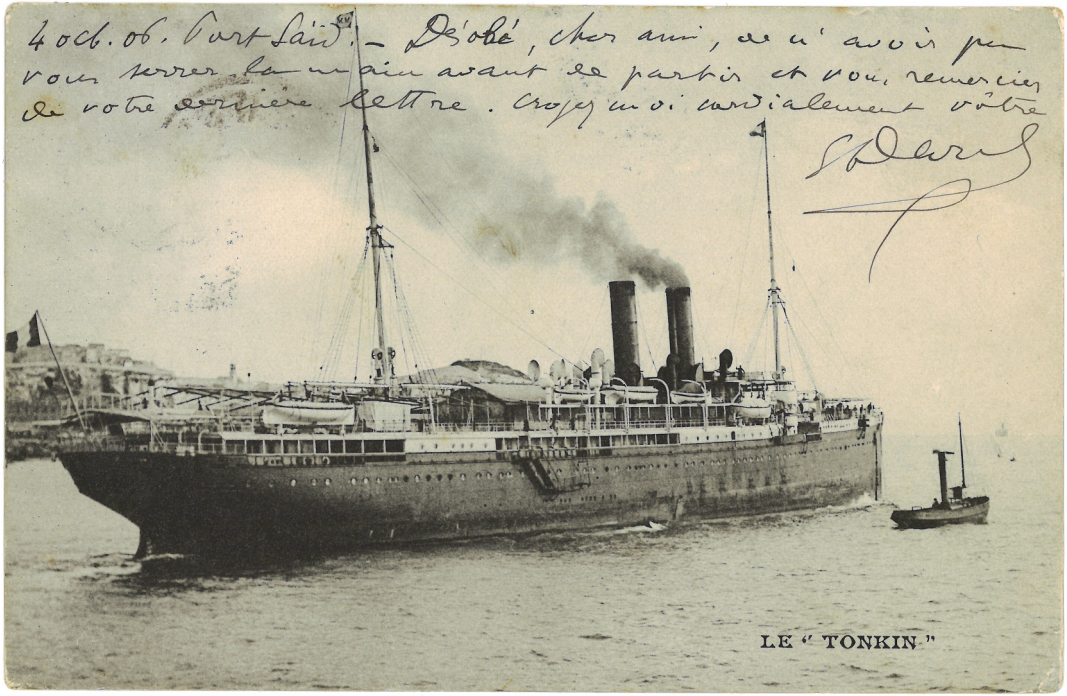
Figeac 15 August 1906

Mr. Ernest Violar
Upholsterer at the port
Figeac
(Lot)

Sending you a souvenir before we begin our journey. Wishing your parents good health. In two years we will see each other.

A friendly handshake,

Gabriél

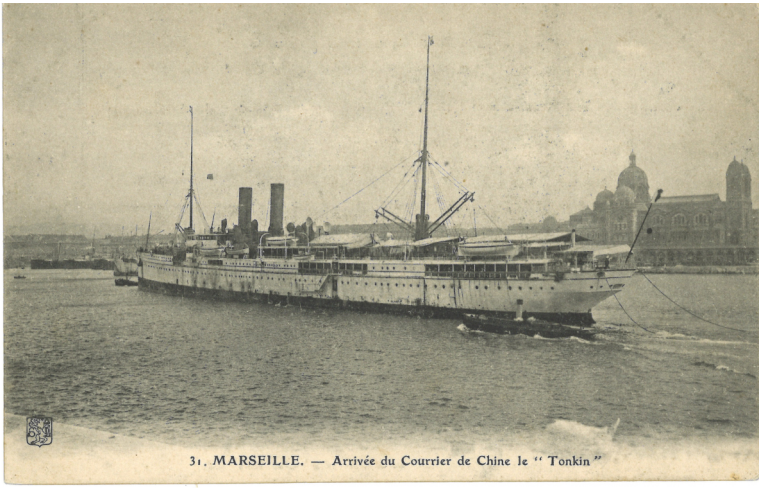

4 oct. 06. Port Said. — Désolé, cher ami, de n'avoir pu
vous serrer la main avant de partir et vous remercier
de votre dernière lettre. Croyez moi cordialement vôtre
LE " TONKIN "

Port Said 4 October 1906

Mr. Weber
Deputy Chief of Staff to the
Minister for the Colonies Paris

Sorry, dear friend, that I was not able to shake your hand before I left and thank you for your last letter. Please believe me.

Yours sincerely.



31. MARSEILLE. — Arrivée du Courrier de Chine le " Tonkin "

CARTE POSTALE

à utiliser seulement dans le régime intérieur
FRANCE - ALGÉRIE - TUNISIE

Partie réservée à la Correspondance

Adresse du Destinataire

Monsieur Joseph Sonet
Commis 2e Section
Constantine
Algerie

On the Tonkin 15 October 1906

Mr. Joseph Porrel
21st Sector
Constantine
Algeria

Dear Cousin,

Here it is, the ship that is taking me away from France, but not away from my memories and from my friends from the village. Farewell, dear cousin, and send my love to Joseph and Marie.

Sending you my love,

A. Dabollet

Write to me in Nanning, China.

725 Messageries Maritimes - Le Tonkin

54

911 930

CARTE POSTALE

La Correspondance au recto n'est pas acceptée par tous les pays étrangers. (Se renseigner à la Poste.)

Partie réservée à la correspondance :

23 - Janv. 1907.

Ma chère Mary.
Votre gentille carte m'a bien fait plaisir. Joseph vous remercie ainsi que moi de vos sentiments de condoléances, nous sommes très heureux de vous savoir tous les trois en bonne santé. Il en est de même pour nous tous jusqu'à présent.
Recevez les meilleures caresses de votre sœur qui vous aime Marie.

Adresse du destinataire

Mad Mary Morné
rue St Sabin 38
Paris
XI^e

On the Tonkin 22 January 1907

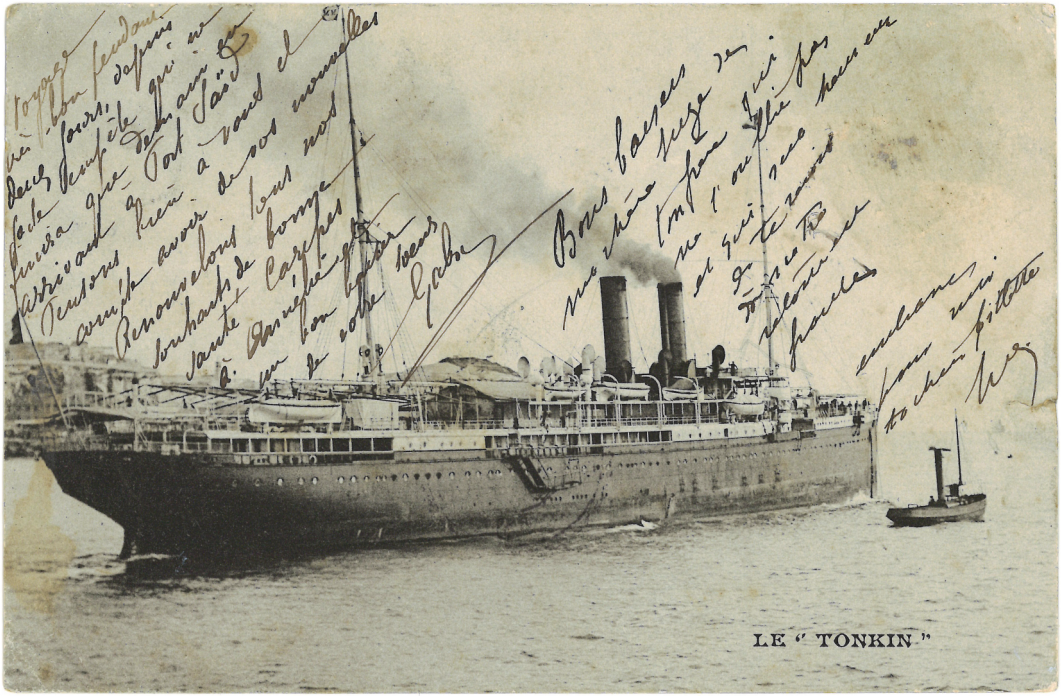
Mrs. Mary Monné
38 rue St. Sabin
Paris, 11th arrondissement

My dear Mary,

Your sweet letter made me very happy. Joseph joins me in thanking you for sending your condolences. We are very happy to know that all three of you are in good health. It is the same for us at the moment.

Please accept my best wishes, from your sister who loves you.

Marie



LE " TONKIN "

On the Tonkin 2 February 1907

Mrs. de Laeraudval
Plazac through Rouffignac
Dordogne

Very good journey for two days, then a tame storm that will only end tomorrow, once we arrive in Port Saïd.

Of course, we are thinking of you and we will have some news to share. We renew our wishes for your good health. Give my love to Amelie and a big kiss from your sister.

My love to you, my dear Luise, from your brother who has not forgotten you and who will be happy to see you again after my return to France.

Please embrace your dear daughter for me.

Le " Tonkin " M. M. par gros temps dans l'Océan Indien
D'après R. Dumont-Duparc, peintre de Marine
La Ciotat
12-5-07
Jacques

CARTE POSTALE
Tous les Pays étrangers n'acceptent pas la Correspondance au recto. – Se renseigner à la Poste
CORRESPONDANCE
Chère Suz
Je suis bien arrivé à Marseille hier. Et aujourd'hui étant débarqué du Gallia, je suis venu passer le dimanche à la Ciotat petit port à 6 Kil. de Marseille. Tâche d'embarquer aux Messageries Maritimes qui prennent armement ici. C'est une petite promenade en compagnie. Reçois les meilleurs amitiés de ton frère
Jacques
et Hommes à toujours à toi
Amond.
ADRESSE
Mlle Suzanne
Martel
Villa Margot
Helgavey
Hundtrupvey
P. d'Jersie
Danemarck
07 5
10
24

La Ciotat 12 May 1907

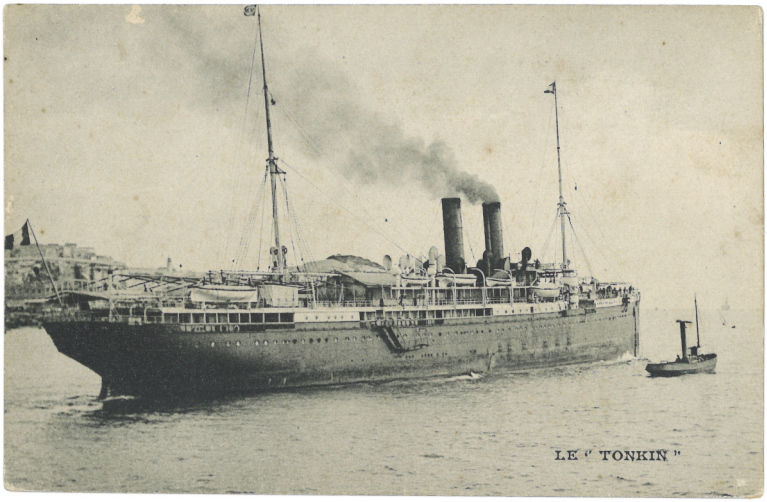
Miss Suzanne Martel
Villa Margot
Helgavej, Hunderupvej
Odense, Denmark

Dear Suz,

I arrived in Marseille safely yesterday and today, having disembarked from the Gallia, I came to spend my Sunday in Le Ciotat, a small port 60 km from Marseille, to try and board the Messageries Maritimes that are loading up their artillery. It was a short stroll in the countryside.

Please accept my best wishes from your brother and say my hellos to everyone else.

Jacques



CARTE POSTALE

DIZIER 12 5 10 07 HTE MARNE

Correspondance

Adresse

Marseille le 4 Octobre 07

Je vais m'embarquer tout à l'heure
Il fait un temps splendide et
la mer est très belle. Je suis bien
gai ici. Je me porte toujours
bien et j'espère que ma carte
vous trouvera de même
Bonjour à tout le monde

Louis Crovitto

M^r A. Martin
Crovitto-Godin
Boulangers
à S^t Dizier
H^te Marne

Marseille 5 October 1907

Mr. and Mrs. Croisille-Gardin
Bakers in St. Dizier
Haute-Marne

I am going to board soon. The weather is wonderful and the sea is beautiful. Even more so than yesterday. I am feeling well today and I hope that my letter will find you likewise.

Say “hello” to everyone.

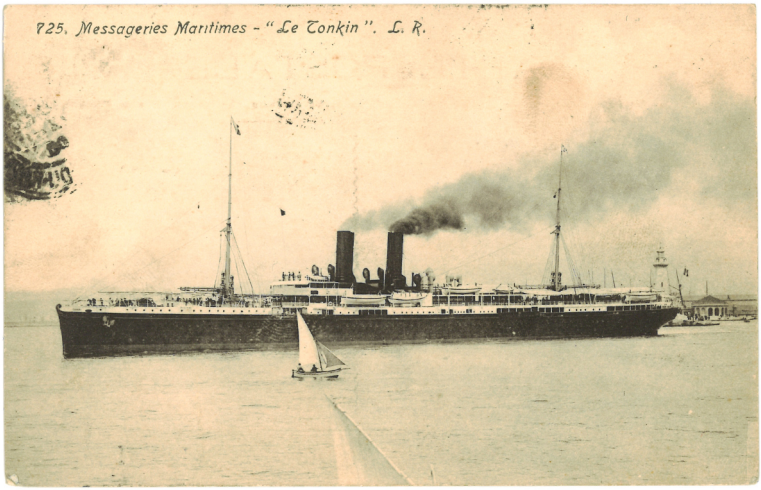
Salle à manger du "Tonkin"
Jules
10c
POSTES
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

On the Tonkin 30 December 1907

Mr. and Miss Arthaud
Malcor near Valserres
Hautes-Alpes

Happy New Year, wishing everyone good health and best wishes for the first day of the year.

Jules


725. Messageries Maritimes - "Le Tonkin". L. R.

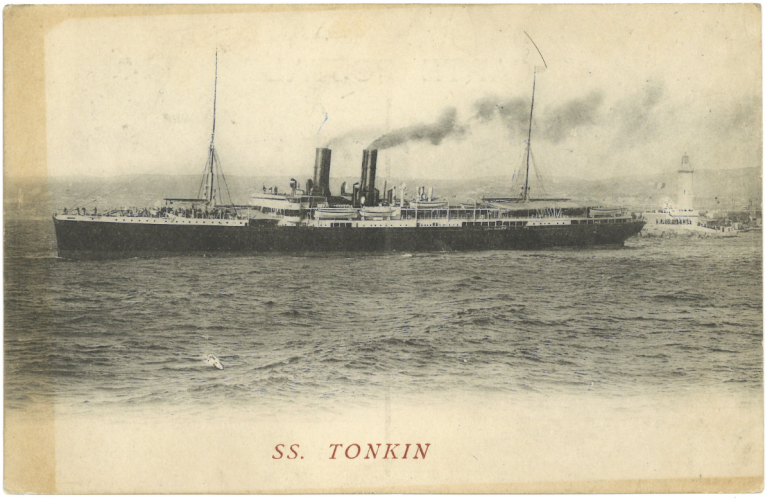
CARTE POSTALE
CORRESPONDANCE
ADRESSE
Marseille - Dimanche matin -
Ca y est, je suis installé à bord du "Tonkin"
dans une très grande chambre à trois
lits où nous ne sommes que tous les deux
avec mon sous-fifre -
Il fait un solide mistral et il va y
avoir sous peu des amateurs pour le
mal de mer - on aura de la mer jusqu'à
demain, où après le bouche de Bonifacio
on aura l'abri de la Sardaigne -
Moi, je m'en fiche -
Excusez moi auprès de personnes que je
n'ai pu voir, Boudet, Grosjos, etc
Bonjour à tous Delaunay
Mr et Madame Lancelin
9 Rue Faraday
Paris
17e

On the Tonkin 1908

Mr. and Mrs. Laucelin
9 Rue Faraday
Paris, 7th arrondissement

Marseille, Sunday morning. This is it; I am settled on board the "Tonkin" in a very large room with three beds, where it is only the two of us, my underling and I. There is a strong mistral, and there will soon be some seasickness enthusiasts. We will be on the sea until tomorrow where, after the Strait of Bonifacio, we will enjoy the shelter of Sardinia. Personally, I am not bothered. Please extend my apologies to the people I could not see: Boudet, Grosgos, etc.

Greetings to all.



SS. TONKIN

CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance

Chère Mlle. Nous avons eu jusqu'ici une traversée très agréable. Société choisie, temps magnifique et santé sans mal de mer. Mimi et moi vous embrassons et espérons avoir de vos nouvelles prochainement.

Betty Rodynay

Adresse

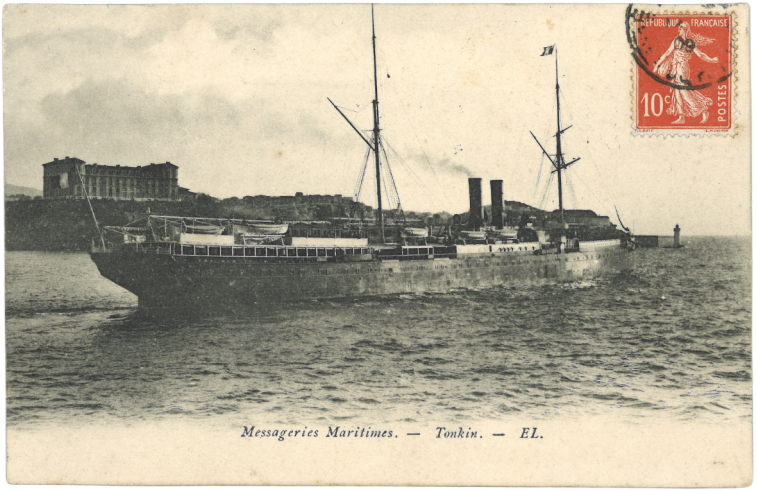
Mlle Jeanne Grénard
C/o Mme Grénard
103 Rue de Rome
Paris
France

On the Tonkin 15 October 1908

Miss Jeanne Grémaud
c/o Mrs. Grémaud
103 Rue du Rome
Paris - France

Dear Mademoiselle,

We have had a very pleasant crossing so far. Delightful company, magnificent weather, and good health, with no seasickness. Mimi and I embrace you and hope to receive some news from you from time to time.



Messageries Maritimes. — Tonkin. — EL.

CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance

- Marseille 14 mars 1909 -

Ci-contre paysage qui
compose notre cher René -
Ici visité des grands bâtiments
avec machines en passant par
la cabine - Beau temps -
Ici assisté au départ et ai
suivi longtemps longtemps
des yeux et du cœur -
Viendrai dimanche
Vous envoie chers Madame
Pérez et chère Madame Mary
mon plus affectueux souvenir
Edr.

Adresse

Madame Pérez
Avenue de la Gare
Bergerac
- Dordogne -

Mer

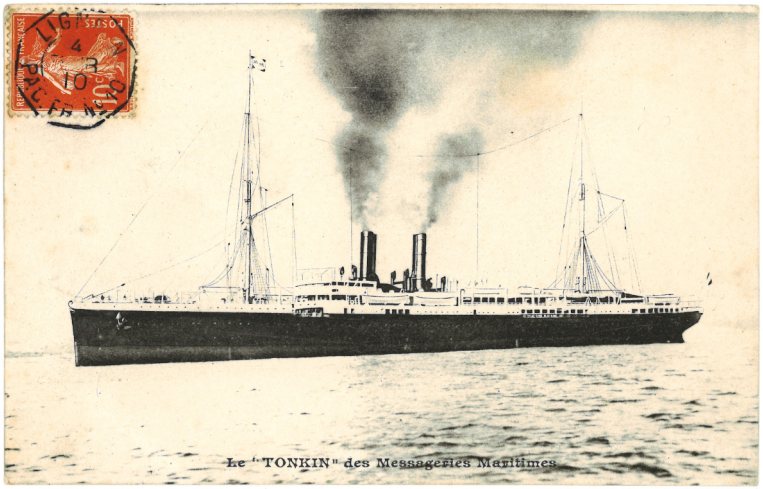
Marseille 14 March 1909

Mrs. Térez
Avenue de la Gare
Bergerac
Dordogne

On the back is the ship carrying our dear René. I visited the upper part over the engine as I stopped by his cabin. Good weather. I bore witness to the departure and followed the ship for a long, long time with my eyes and my heart.

I will come by on Sunday to see Madame Térez and dear Madame Mary.

My best wishes.



à Paris :
40 rue Scheffer
à Saïgon :
4 rue Catinat

cachet Maritime

15 c

CARTE POSTALE

Tous les pays étrangers n'acceptent pas la correspondance au recto.
(Se renseigner à la Poste)

Correspondance

à bord
Canal de Suez 4 février 19..

Chers Monsieur et Amie,

Je viens vous dire tout mon regret d'avoir été dans l'impossibilité d'aller vous rendre visite pendant mon très court séjour à Paris. Occupé et très compliqué séjour, durant cette angoissante période des mobilisations à Paris. J'ai laissé Edmée et Nikki en bonne santé, mais Edmée attendant un bébé en Mai. Il a bien mis accompli ce dernier qui nous fait une bien grande joie. Comptez nos sympathies, aussi nos respectueux hommages pour Madame Tournier. Bien à vous et bonne santé. Votre entièrement dévoué Hugo

Adresse

Monsieur et Madame
Tournier
43 rue de Lévis
Paris
(France)

Suez Canal 4 February 1910

Mr. and Mrs. Tournier
43 rue de Lévis
Paris
France

In Paris: 40 rue Scheffer
In Saigon: 4 rue Catinat

Dear Sir and friend,

I am sending you a few words given that it was impossible for me to come see Mr. Tournier and you during my too short, too busy and too complicated stay during this frightening period of flooding in Paris. I am leaving Edmée and Kiki in good health, but since Edmée is expecting a baby in May, she was unable to accompany me around, which I am feeling sorry about. Given her state, she will be unable to visit you in Cannes for the same reason. I am sending you my best wishes, and my respectful regards.

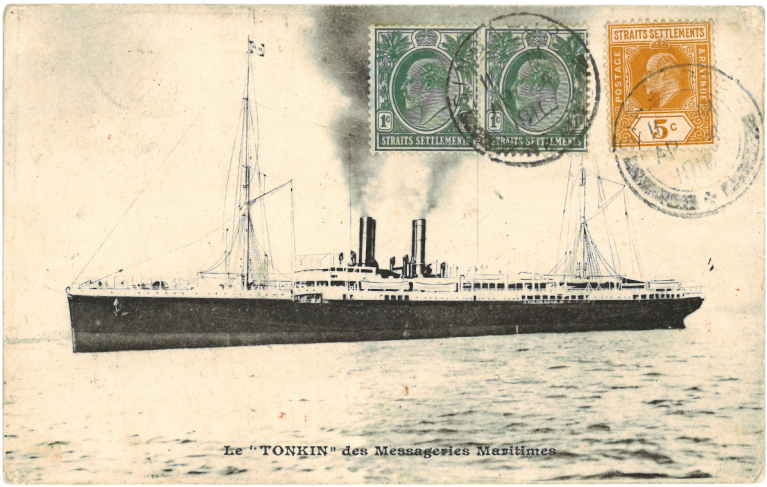
Wishing good health to everyone.

REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
5c
POSTES
27-3-10
Messageries Maritimes. — Tonkin.

On the Tonkin 27 March 1910

Miss Therèse Gauchon
Hôtel de la Place
Fontaines-sur-Saône

A thousand kisses.


STRAITS SETTLEMENTS
POSTAGE
REVENUE
5c
Le "TONKIN" des Messageries Maritimes

42840
CARTE POSTALE
Tous les pays étrangers n'acceptent pas la correspondance
(Se renseigner à la Poste)
STRAITS SETTLEMENTS
3c
Correspondance
Singapoure le 3 Avril 1910.
Cher Monsieur Braun
Voyage merveilleux
et la mer calme
depuis Haiphong.
J'espère de vous
revoir bientôt.
Amitiés
Adresse
Autriche
Monsieur
H. Braun
Buggleton
Route J. Tyrol
Prague
SINGAPORE,
26

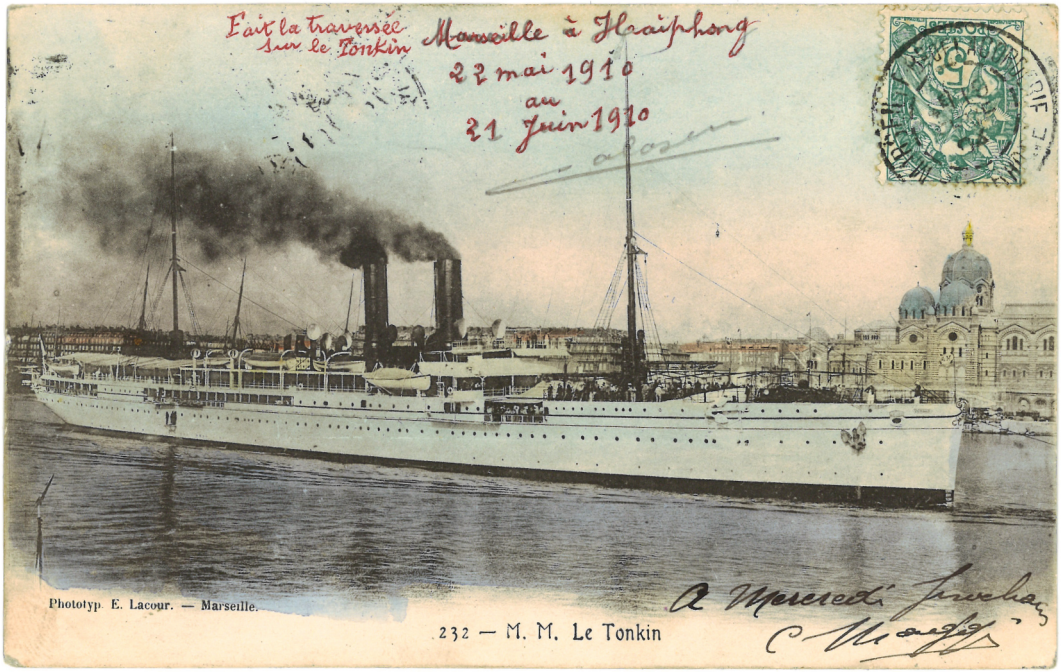
Singapore 3 April 1910

Austria
H. Braun
Reutte in Tyrol

Dear Mr. Braun,

Wonderful trip and calm sea from Haiphung. I hope to see you again soon.

Best regards.

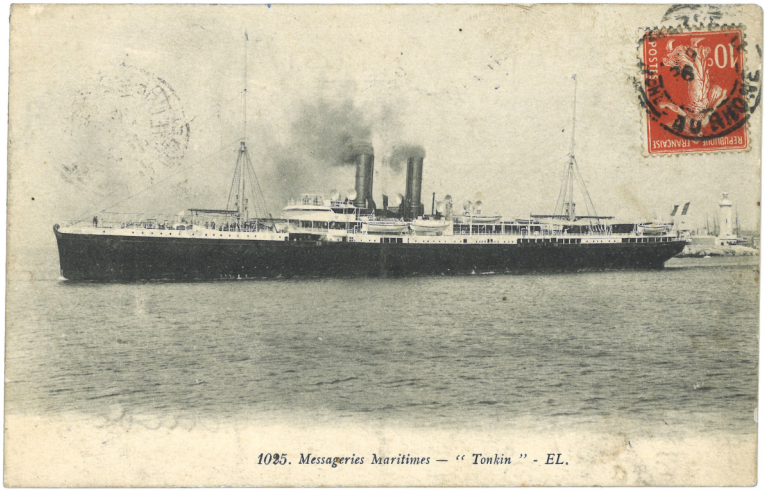

Fait la traversée sur le Tonkin
Marseille à Haiphong
22 mai 1910
au
21 Juin 1910
Phototyp. E. Lacour. — Marseille.
232 — M. M. Le Tonkin

Haiphong 29 June 1910

Mr. Leopold Calazel
Mechanical Quartermaster
aboard the [----]
Toulon

Travelled on the Tonkin:
Marseille to Haiphong
22 May 1910 to 21 June 1910.

See you next Wednesday.



1025. Messageries Maritimes — " Tonkin " - EL.

Marseille 27 August 1911

Miss Paule Nibault
with her parents in Thieffrain
via Vendeuvre
Aube

My dear Paule,

Thousands of thanks for your kind letter. I do not know if I have deserved them, but I will be happy to have your words as a companion during my crossing. The journey from Paris to Marseille went smoothly: we leave tomorrow at 11 on the ship on the back of this card. One last farewell.

My respects to your parents. My regards to Louis when you see him, and to you the assurance of my respectful affection.

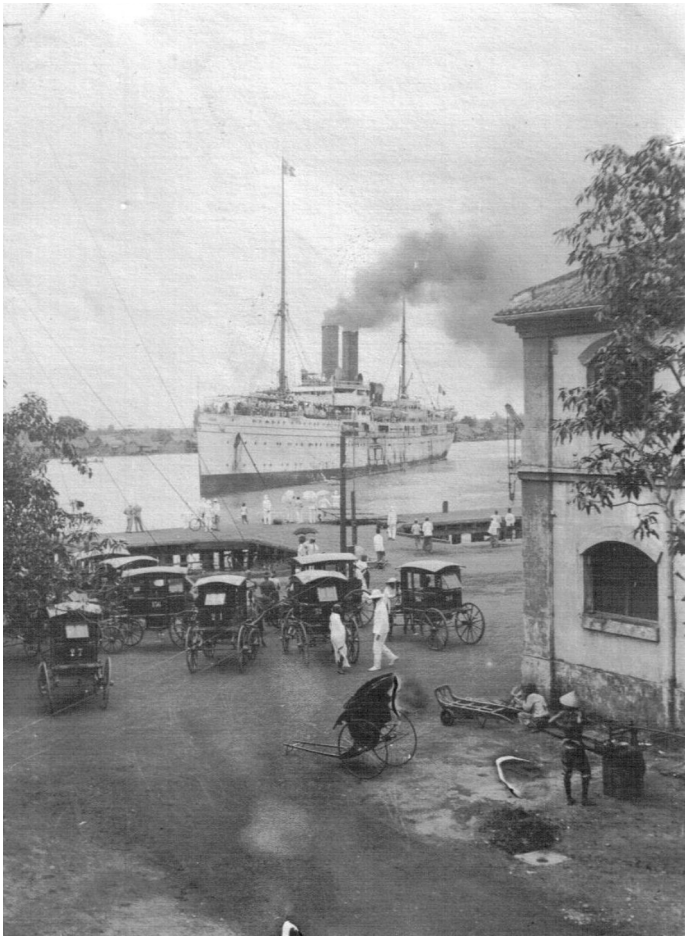
↑ Prince Wilhelm of Sweden and Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna of Russia in the year of their trip to the Far East (1912). © George Grantham Bain Collection (Library of Congress).

… not much remains to be said of Cochin-China, as the S.S. *Tonkin* left the Paris of the East the following evening and steered westward for Singapore. A more cordial farewell than that which was given us can seldom have fallen to the lot of any roving tourists; my wife especially was the object of warm ovations, and the wealth of flowers that decorated her cabin during the passage defies description.

The whole town came down and waved handkerchiefs, and long after the steamer had cast off we heard the cries of "Au revoir" and "Vive la Princesse Lointaine!".

And then we were once more on the blue billows. It was one of those marvellous, calm tropical nights with a bright full moon shining in a cloudless sky, when all nature lies asleep in a web of the finest silver threads. The river banks glided slowly past like the scenery of a shadow play, and here and there the slack sails of sampans were mirrored like great bats' wings in the glittering water.

Saigon with its lights and noise grew more and more distant, and soon the majestic silence of the night reigned over land and sea, only broken by



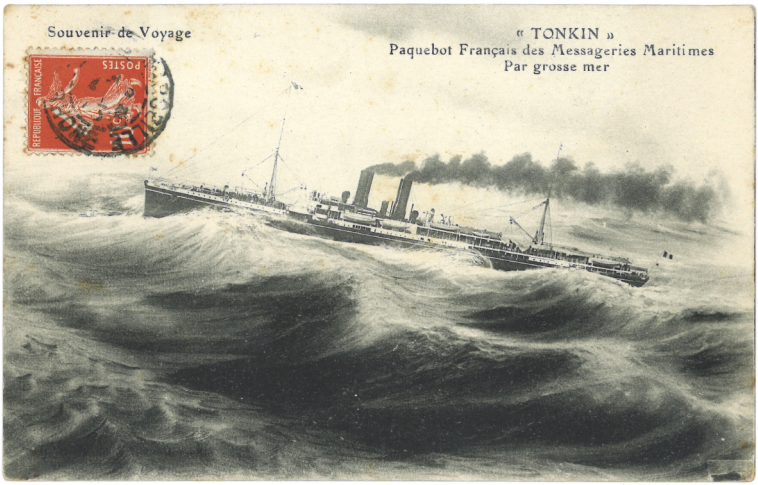
↑ Arrival of the *Tonkin* in Saigon in July 1903. From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

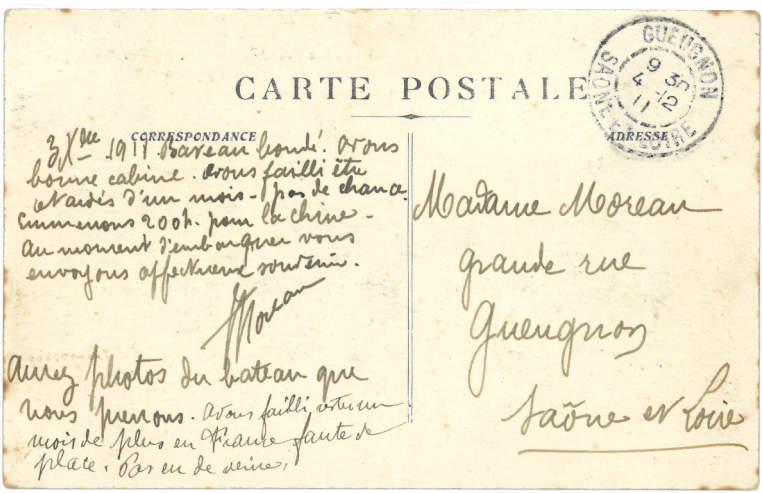
the regular throbbing of the engines. Farewell, Indo-China! Farewell, jungle and prairies, that I have learnt to love and that call me back with a strange enchantment - an enchantment which I hardly understand myself, but which makes the blood run quicker at the memory of your virgin charm and beauty.

Farewell, glorious life of the wilds! When shall I know you again?

Two days later, after a rather troublesome voyage on a poor French boat with good food, we arrived at Singapore.

Source: Prince Wilhelm of Sweden, *In the Lands of the Sun: Notes and Memories of a Tour in the East* (E Nash 1915) 223-225.


Souvenir de Voyage
« TONKIN »
Paquebot Français des Messageries Maritimes
Par grosse mer
POSTES
REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE


CARTE POSTALE
CORRESPONDANCE
ADRESSE
GUEUGNON
SAONE ET LOIRE
3 XBre 1911 Bateau bondé. Avons bonne cabine. Avons failli être arrêtés d'un mois - pas de chance. Commençons à voir la Chine - Au moment d'embarquer vous envoyons affectueux souvenir.
Autres photos du bateau que nous prenons. Avons failli rester mois de plus en Indochine faute de place. Bon en de seine.
Madame Moreau
grande rue
Gueugnon
Saône et Loire

Marseille 4 December 1912

Mrs. Moreau
Grande rue
Gueugnon, Saône-et-Loire

Ship boarded! Have a good cabin. We were almost delayed by a month. No such luck. Beginning at 2000h for China. As soon as we disembark, we will send you our regards.

Here is a photo of the ship we will be taking. We were almost stuck in France for an extra month because there was no free space.

990. Messageries Maritimes " LOTUS " - EL.

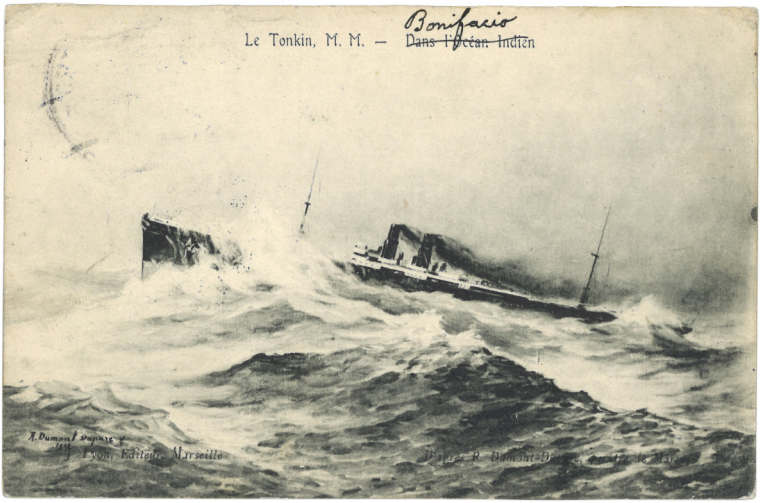
Alexandria 11 March 1913

Mr. R. Deygas
Artist
191bis rue de Grenelle
Paris

Dear friend as much as brother,

Had a splendid crossing on the ship at the back. I will bring you the full collection of postcards that I have collected from various countries that we visited on this ship. I am hoping to display them at home.

Sending you my regards.

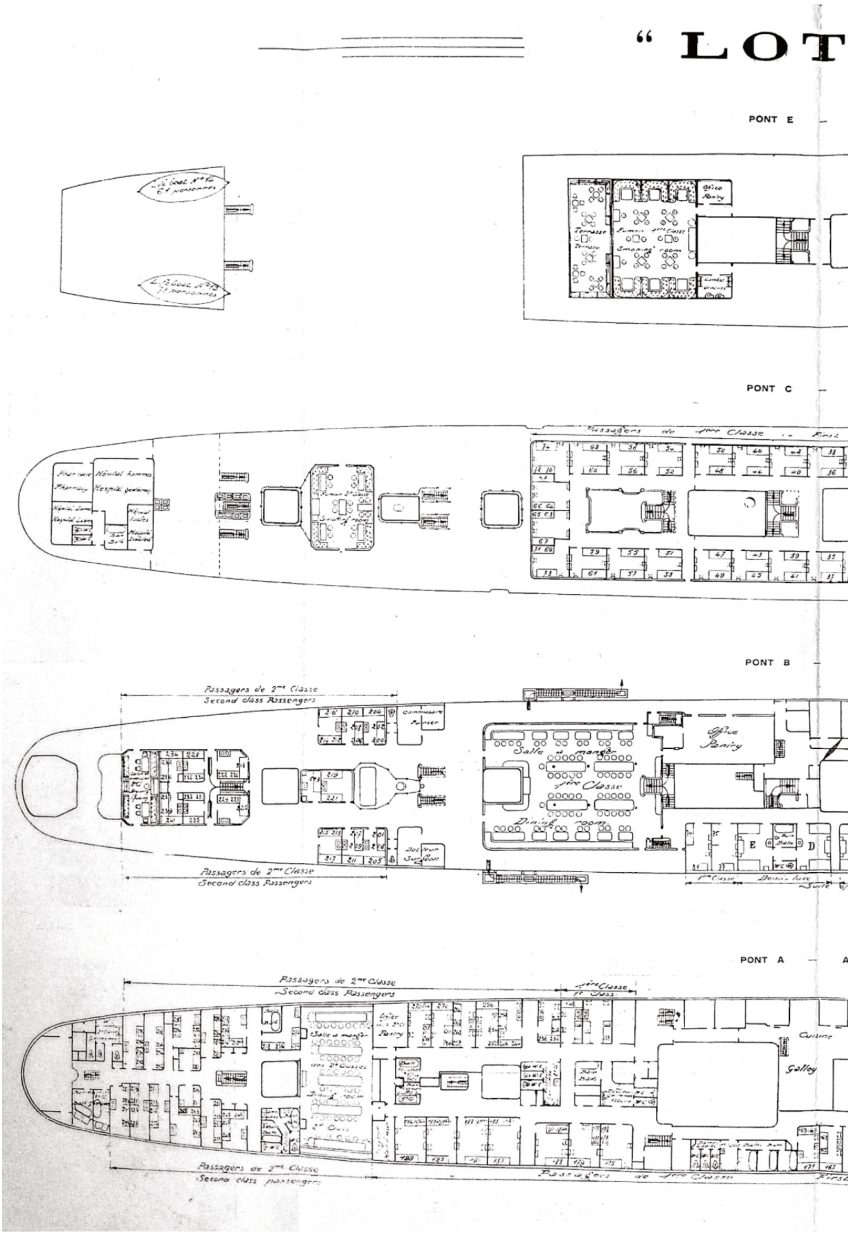

Le Tonkin, M. M. — Bonifacio ~~Dans l'Océan Indien~~

CARTE POSTALE
Correspondance
le 12. 8. 13. 9 h.
Que la divine Mère de N.-S. vous obtienne jeudi les grâces les plus abondantes.
J. C.
Mlle M. Wallaert
Chalet des Acacias
Mont Dieu
Sedan
Ardennes.
Poncin ateliers Baudouin Vincent Marseille

Bonifacio 12 August 1913

Mrs. and Mr. Wallaert
Châlet des Acacias, “Mon Idée”
Sedan
Ardennes

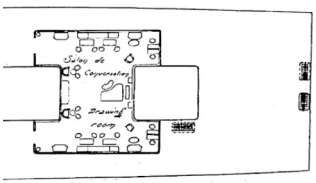
May the divine Mother of Our Lady
obtain for you the most abundant graces
on Thursday.



Deck plan: Deck plan of the *Lotus* after 1913. From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

U S ”

E DECK



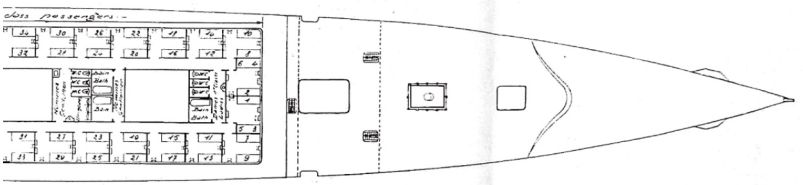
Longueur	142 mètres
Largeur	15 mètres
Déplacement	10 500 Tx.
Force en chevaux	9.600 HP

Les N^os^ les plus faibles indiquent les couchettes supérieures

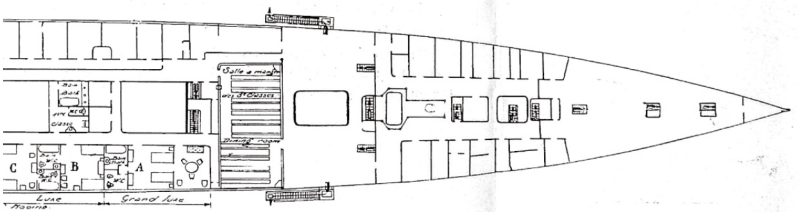
Length	426 feet
Breadth	46 feet
Displacement	10.500 Tx.
Horse Power	9.600 HP

Smaller numbers show upper berths

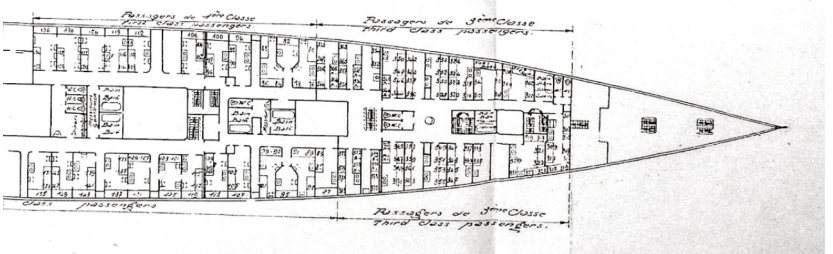
C DECK



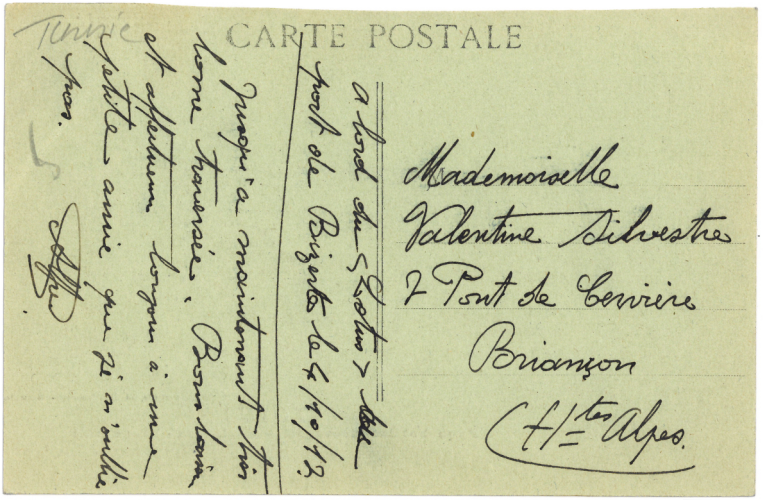
B DECK



DECK



LOTUS
Paquebot des Messageries Maritimes - Vu de Nuit
Du port de Bizerte Bon souvenir


CARTE POSTALE
Tunisie
A bord du "Lotus" dans le port de Bizerte le 4/10/19
Mademoiselle
Valentine Silvestre
7 Pont de Cervières
Briançon
(Htes Alpes)

On the Lotus 4 October 1913

Miss Valentine Silvestre
7 Pont de Cervières
Briançon
Hautes-Alpes

From the port of Bizerte. Fond memory.

Aboard the 'Lotus' from the port of Bizerte on 4 October 1913.

Up to now, a very good crossing.

Warm regards and an affectionate hello to a little friend I have not forgotten.

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES
Paquebot " LOTUS "

MESSAGERIES
MARITIMES
CARTE POSTALE
WARSTEINER
18 30 12
3 18
10c
M. G. Pillet
Beaumanoir
1e Symphorien
près Tours
(Indre-et-Loire)

Marseille 3 December 1913

Mr. G. Pillet Beaumanoir
St. Symphorien near Tours
Indre-et-Loire

Dear Father,

Arriving in Marseille, I found your letter and thank you for the good news that it brought me. It is the 'Lotus' on the back that brought us here after a very hard crossing, and an earthquake near the Strait of Messina that shook us all and caused an alert on board. Finally, I am almost home; tomorrow morning I will be in Paris and will write to you to arrange my arrival in Tours on Saturday evening.

My love to all,

Aubrey

CARTE POSTALE

Le Mercredi 18 Avril 1914

A vous tous

dans 15 jours nous serons parmi vous
et je pense que ma carte vous arrivera
en bonne santé notre déjeuner de
mardi c'est très bien passé je
pense que vous avez reçu la
petite vitesse vous y trouverai
les pièces à poste ce sont celles
qui ont la prise 3 centimes et
les autres sont des 10 qui a la fleurs
d'oranger si vous en faut pour
une bouteille et nous porterons
avec nous dans ma malle
voyage du vin qui y aura un
bon à moi j'y avant mi mon
non rien n'autre a vous dire
amitiés a tous ceux qui vous
parlerons de nous bonne caresse
a Jeanne que nous trouverons
bien grandi et bien sage

Edmond

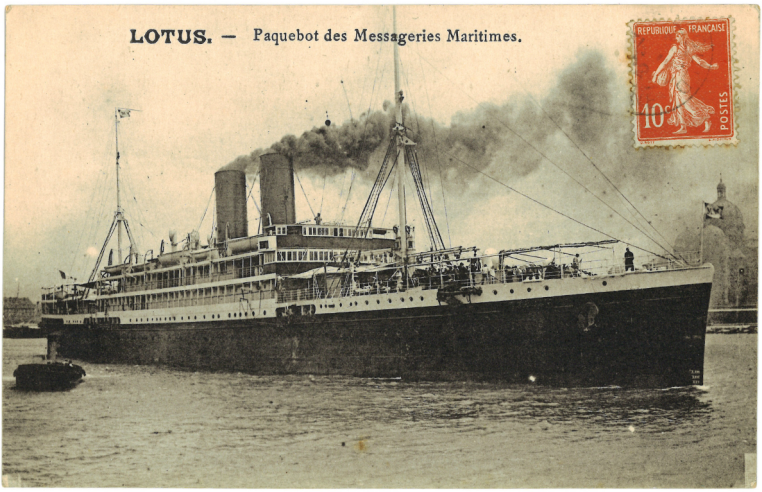
On the Lotus 19 April 1914

To you all,

In fifteen days we will be among you and I think that my letter will find you all in good health. Our Tuesday lunch went very well. I hope you received the little package I sent you. Inside, you will find the drinks, they are the 35 cents ones and the 40 cents ones made with orange flower. We will bring more bottles in my suitcase. In the package there is a box that is mine. You should have seen that I put my name on it. Nothing else to add.

My regards to anyone who asks after us. My best wishes to Jeanne whom we will find older and wiser.

Adrienne



11

CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance *Adresse*

Je t'aime ma Germaine et je veux que tu sois tranquille et heureuse soigne toi ma mignonne et ne prive de rien car à chaque courrier tu aurais toy nécessaire.

Je t'embrasse follement mais mes douces et affectueuses caresses.

Pour Moi que t'aime Sauk L.

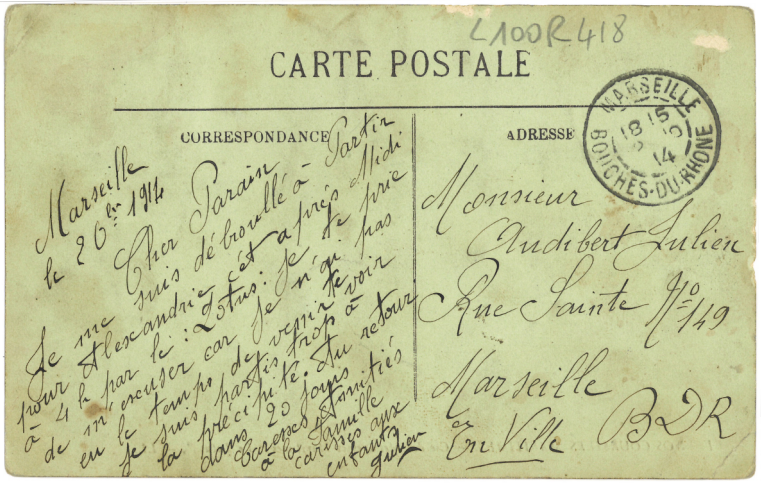
On the Lotus 1914

I love you, my dear Germaine, and I want you to be relaxed and happy. Take care of yourself, my dear, and do not deprive yourself of anything because with each letter, I will send you what you need. I love you madly, and send you my sweet and affectionate wishes.

Your husband who loves you.

Claude

C'est un des plus beaux
Paquebots auquel j'aurais
navigué à la Cie Mell.
REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
10c
POSTES
61 NOS COURRIERS MARITIMES. — Cie des Messageries Maritimes " Le Lotus ". — LL.


L100R418
CARTE POSTALE
CORRESPONDANCE
ADRESSE
MARSEILLE
BOUCHES-DU-RHONE
Monsieur
Audibert Julien
Rue Sainte N° 149
Marseille
En Ville
BDR

Marseille 2 October 1914

Mr. Audibert Julien
Rue Sainte No. 149
Marseille
En ville, BDR

Dear Godfather,

I managed to leave for Alexandria this afternoon at 4 o'clock on the Lotus. Please forgive me that I did not have time to come see you as I left too hastily. I will be back in 20 days.

Love and warm wishes to the family and hugs to the children.

Julien

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

AGENTS :
PERRIN & Co
LAUSANNE

CARTE POSTALE

HELVETIA 10

MONTREUX-BON PORT 13.X.14-5 V.

Bien chers amis. Nous avons passé de mauvais moments depuis que nous avons eu le plaisir de vous écrire de Soulay. Puis nous avons eu fleur toute la Suisse, Bâle, Brunes du & en ce moment nous nous trouvons à Montreux où il fait plus chaud pour ma santé que dans la montagne. Ma santé n'est toujours pas encore parfaite car je tousse encore & cependant nous rentrons travaillons dans 8/10 jours. Nous serons heureux d'avoir de vos nouvelles avant retour vous prions de nous écrire Levallois. Nous espérons qu'elles seront bonnes. En attendant nous vous embrassons tous cordialement

Ch & Ch. Ruh

Montreux (Suisse) 12-10-14

M. Monsieur & Madame
Alphonse Kelles
14 rue Carducci
Paris 19e

F. Detaille, édit., Marseille

Montreux 12 October 1914

Mr. and Mrs. Alphonse Keller
14 rue Carducci
Paris, 19th arrondissement

Dear friends,

We have had a hard time since we had the pleasure of writing to you from Foutay, from where we had to flee for Basel, Switzerland. At the moment we are in Montreux, where it is warmer for my health than in the mountains. My health is still not perfect as I am still coughing. However, we will be returning to Levallois in 8 to 10 days. We look forward to hearing from you when we return.

Please write to us in Levallois. We hope your news will be good.

In the meantime, we send you all our warmest regards.

Ch. & Ch. Ruh, Montreux (Switzerland), 12-10-14

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

AGENTS:
PERRIN & Cie
LAUSANNE

CARTE POSTALE

F. Detaille édit. Marseille

Marseille le 14 octobre 1914

Chère Alice

Voici la carte que j'ai promise à Jules. Il a été très heureux de recevoir de tes nouvelles. Il va bien, le pauvre garçon, mais il a beaucoup souffert. Les vagues ont rapidement envahi le navire et il a dû se réfugier sur le pont. Il a perdu tous ses bagages et ses bouteilles. Je vais lui offrir quelques raisins que j'ai achetés ce soir à la gare. Il sera très heureux de savoir que Jules a envoyé 2 jours à l'avance de l'argent pour ses frères. Depuis les coups de canon ils ne vont plus à l'école. Ils sont très tristes à cause de leur frère. J'ai pensé à eux tous les jours et j'espère qu'ils sont bien portés.

Envoie à ta famille les bonnes salutations de votre mère et grand-mère Le Jamin

Je vous écrirai bientôt. Gardez-vous bien tous.

Madame

Perraz Yauseu

Villa Ortéa B

Cour

Lausanne

Alexandria 14 October 1914

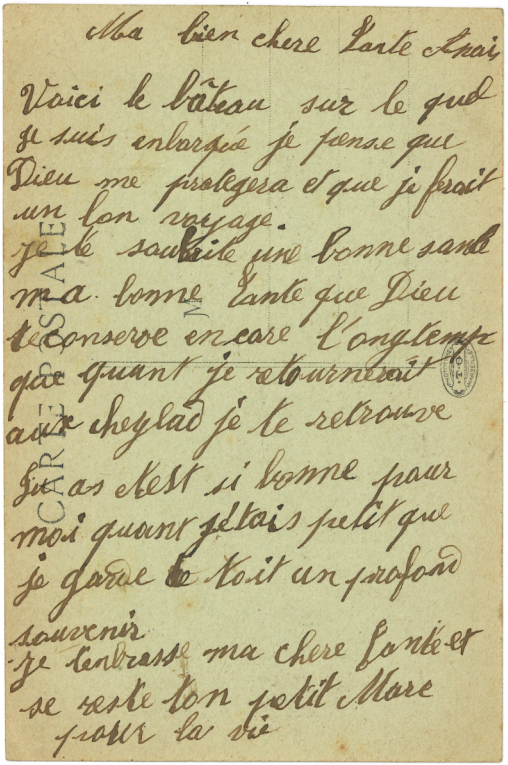
Mrs. Devaz Jaunim
Villa Ortesci 13
Cour Lausanne

Dear Alix,

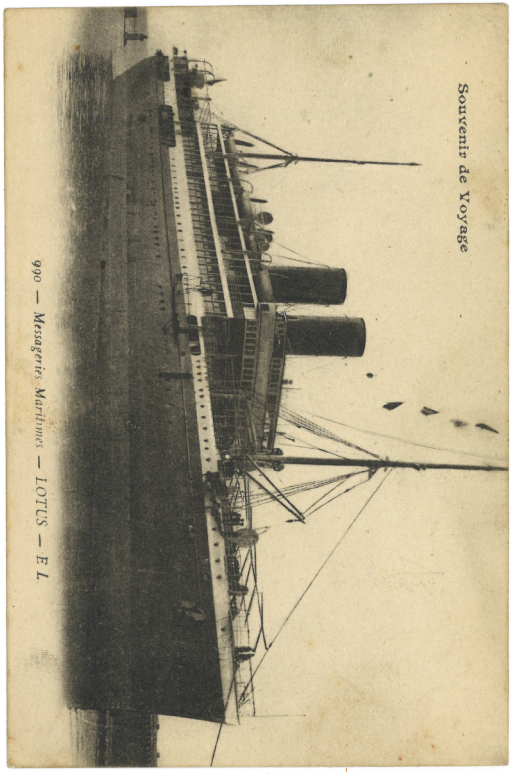
Thank you for your letter. I have three days of grape harvest and pressing and then, if the weather and God permit it, I will be coming to you. The grape harvest is moving rapidly and you can still see the harvest baskets being transported. I will bring you some grapes that Mr. Chapuis gave me tonight. If Henri had known that Jules had arranged for two days off, he would have asked to see him from the shores, even if the two have been fighting for 18 days now. I had hoped to spend some days together but everyone has left now.

Please accept our warmest regards from your mother and grandmother.

I just saw Caroline who says hello to everyone.



Ma bien chere Tante Lais
Voici le bâteau sur le quel
je suis enbarqué je pense que
Dieu me protegera et que je frait
un bon voyage.
je te souhaite une bonne sante
ma bonne Tante que Dieu
te conserve encore l'onglemps
que quant je retournerait
aux cheylad je te retrouve
sur as nest si bonne pour
moi quant jetais petit que
je garde de toit un profond
souvenir
je t'embrasse ma chere Tante et
se reste ton petit Marc
pour la vie

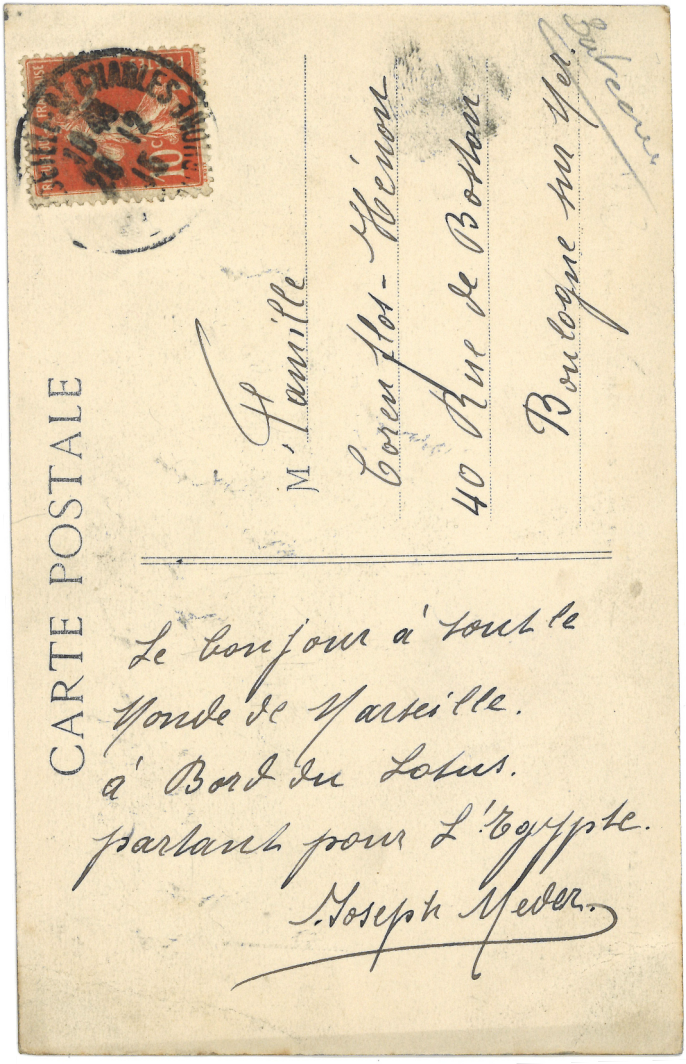


On the Lotus 1915

My very dear Aunt Anais,

This is the boat that I am on. I believe that God will protect me and that I will have a good trip. I wish you good health, my dear aunt, and may God keep you safe for a long time, so that when I return to Cheylade I can see you again. You were so kind to me when I was young that I hold a fond memory of you.

I send you my love, my dear aunt, and I will always be your little Marc.



CARTE POSTALE

M^r Famille

Lyon 101 - Monplaisir

40 Rue de Bonnac

Bourgogne sur Yer.

Le bonjour à toute la
Bande de Marseille.
à Bord du Lotus.
partant pour L'Egypte.

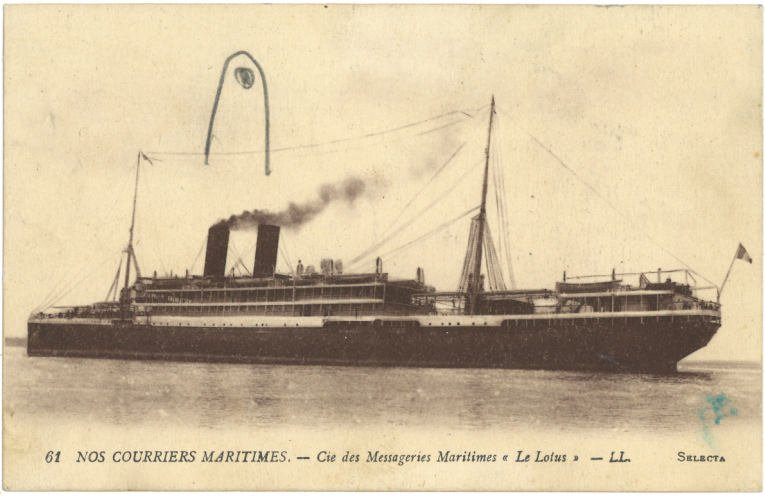
Joseph Meder.

Marseille 28 December 1915

Family Soren Flos-Hénon
40 Rue de Bosson
Boulogne-sur-Mer

Hello to everyone from Marseille. Aboard the Lotus leaving for Egypt.

Joseph Meder



61 NOS COURRIERS MARITIMES. — Cie des Messageries Maritimes « Le Lotus » — LL. SELECTA

9/3 Je vous prie de transmettre mes amitiés à Mr et Rivat et Auguis —

CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance

Un mot de la Prairie - Je me trouve actuellement sur le Vieux-Port, et on sent la sardine, (pas celle qui bouche le Port) mais celles que les pêcheurs sont en train de débarquer. — Je pense que vous avez dû recevoir ma lettre et compte en avoir une de vous à mon arrivée à Lyon.

Adresse

Recevez mes meilleurs baisers de Marseille

Marseille 1915

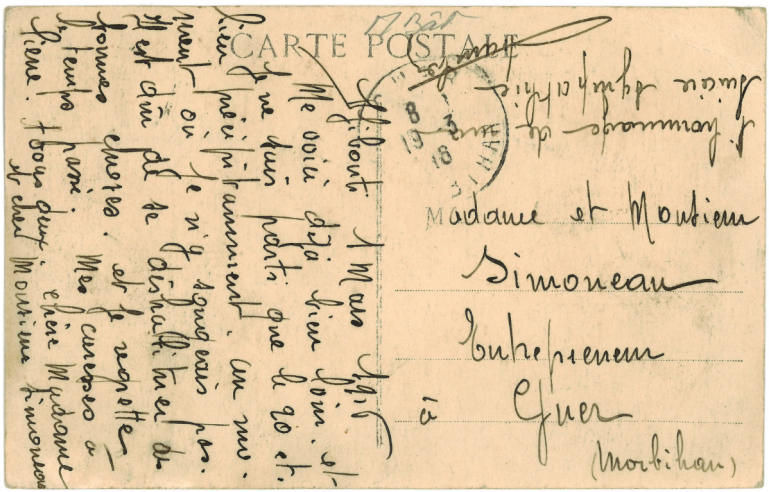
A few words in haste. I am now down at the "Vieux-Port", and it smells of sardines (not the ones that blocked the harbour[1]), but the ones the fishermen are unloading. I think you must have received my letter, and I hope to find one from you waiting when I arrive in Lyon.

Please accept my warmest regards from Marseille,

René

[1] The phrase "the sardine that blocked the port of Marseille" is a humorous expression related to a real 18th-century shipwreck (that of *La Sartine*), later exaggerated into a local joke about turning a tiny incident into a grand story. It is still used today.

S.S. LOTUS
Paquebot Français des Messageries Mari
(Service rapide et régulier entre Marseille et
REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
5c
POSTES
Voilà le ship ! mon ship !


CARTE POSTALE
Madame et Monsieur
Simoneau
Entrepreneur
à
Cruer
(Morbihan)

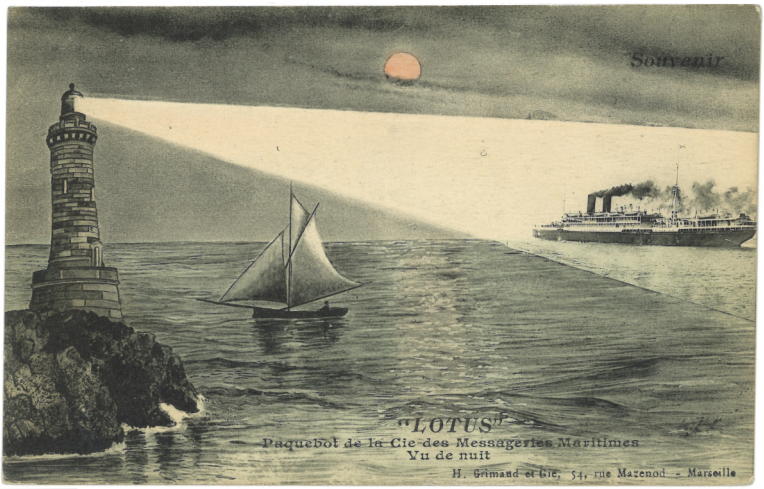
Djibouti 1 March 1916

Mr. and Mrs. Simoneau
Businessman
Guer (Morbihan)

Here is the ship! My ship!

Here I am, already a long way away, and I did not leave until the 20th, and in quite a hurry. A time when I was not thinking about it. It is hard to lose touch with the good things in life and I miss the old days.

My love to Pierre. To both of you, dear Madame and dear Monsieur Simoneau, my sincere sympathies.



CARTE POSTALE

P. Said le 9 avril. 16. Cher Mr Stenvert.

Je vous avise une toile fantastique heureusement qu'elle non est encore arrivée en bon moment. Figurez vous avant-hier soir en arrivant au port d'amarrage de P. Said nous avons eu une avarie d'hélice qui doit nous immobiliser ici pendant 7 ou 8 jours. Si cette avarie nous était arrivée en mer qu'aurions nous fait ??? Ici nous ne sommes pas trop mal le climat est très doux, nous sommes à l'abri et nous prenons encore un petit congé, toujours aux frais de la princesse. Dès notre arrivée je vous ai adressé une carte dans laquelle je vous disais que nous avions fait une traversée splendide. mais à ce moment là je ne m'attendais pas du tout à cette toile. Par ailleurs tout va à merveille. Je me porte très bien et cet avec beaucoup de calme que j'attends le jour où nous reprendrons la route ensoleillée de Djibouti.

Au revoir. et bonne santé à tous. Ed Ballangé

Port Said 9 April 1916

Dear Mr. Schneider,

We have had some incredibly rotten luck. Thankfully, it arrived upon us at a good moment. Can you believe that the evening before yesterday, while docking at Port Saïd, our ship's propellers were damaged, which has immobilised us here for 7 or 8 days. What if this damage had occurred to us in open sea, what would we have done then? Here, things are not too bad. The weather is mild, we have shelter and we continue our holidays, still at the princess' expense. On the day of our arrival, I sent you a letter where I told you that we had a wonderful crossing, but I did not expect all this bad luck. Otherwise, everything is going great. I am doing well and I am calmly waiting for the day when we will retake our sunny route to Djibouti.

Goodbye and good health to all of you.

The Ballangers

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

Cher Monsieur – L'on se sert de l'usage du cor – Serie pour en conséquence assez aimable. Si vous n'en avez plus besoin, pour faire remettre au porteur le volume déposé dans votre coffre

Merci d'avoir

Paquebot " LOTUS "

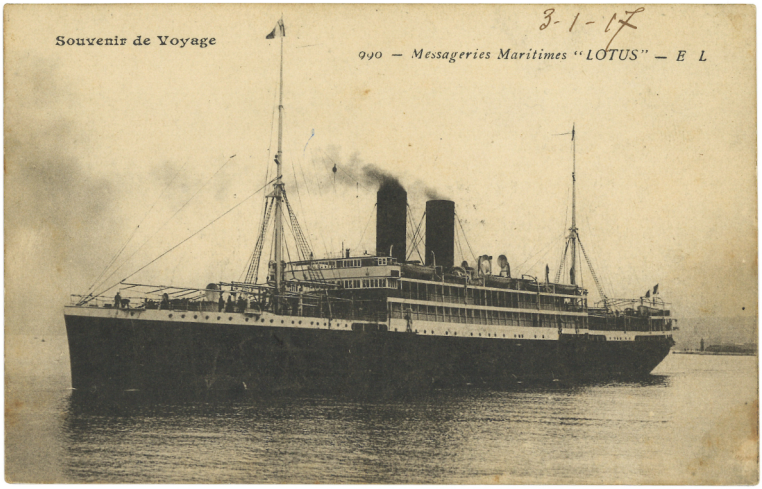
Alexandria 1916

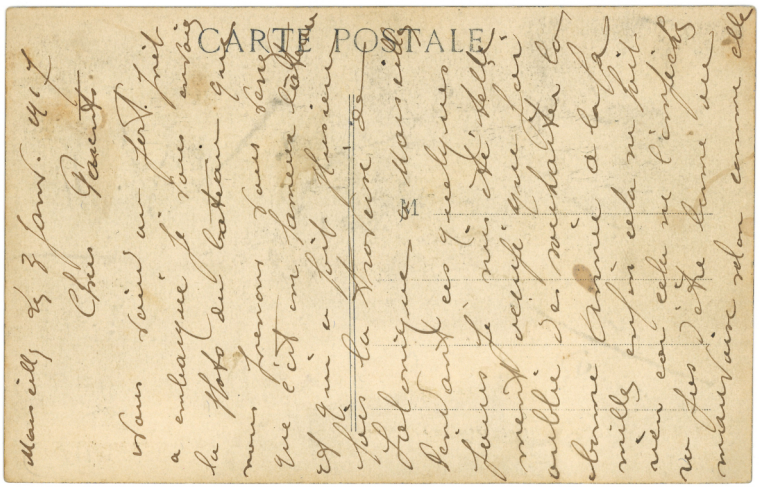
Dear Sir,

We are about to depart for Cairo. I would be very grateful if, should you no longer need it, you could return the volume I left in your lockbox to the porter.

Thank you and best wishes,

Geneviève

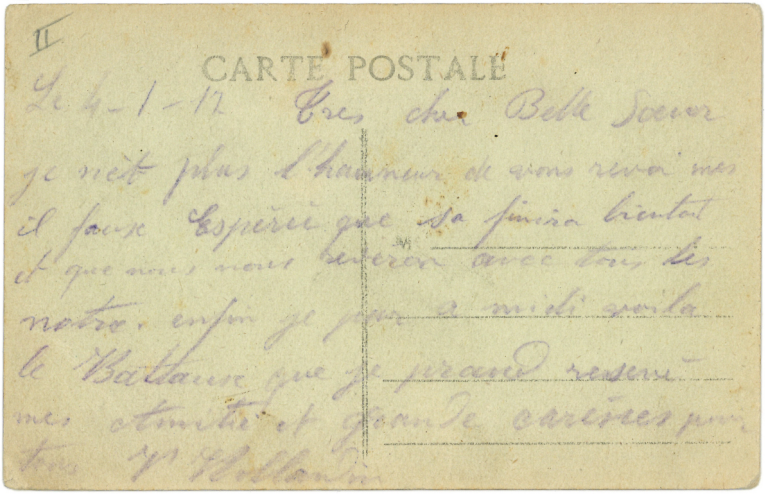

Souvenir de Voyage
990 — Messageries Maritimes "LOTUS" — E L
3-1-17


CARTE POSTALE

Marseille 3 January 1917

Dear Parents,

Here we are at port. We have boarded and I am sending you a picture of the ship we are going to take. It is a famous ship that has done the journey from Thessaloniki to Marseille multiple times. For some days I have been so busy that I forgot to wish a good year to the family. Though it hardly matters as this will not influence whether the year ends up being good or bad.



II

Le 4-1-17 Ces chers Belle Soeur

je n'ai pas l'honneur de vous revoir mes

il faut espérer que ça finira bientôt

et que nous nous verrons avec tous les

notre. enfin je pense à mieux voilà

le Bataillon que je prends reserve

mes amitiés et grande caresses pour

tous. Gt Hollande

Marseille 4 January 1917

Very dear sister-in-law,

I did not get the honour of meeting you and we must hope that it shall happen soon and that we will all get together with our families. Finally, I leave at midday on the ship on the back that I reserved with others.

I shall wait for your response and I send you and everyone my regards.

S.S. LOTUS
Paquebot Français des Messageries Maritimes
(Service rapide et régulier entre Marseille et l'Orient)

CARTE POSTALE
Monsieur et Madame
Porter
9 rue de Paris
Rennes
(I-et-Vilaine)
France

On the Lotus 27 March 1917

Mr. and Mrs. Porter
9 rue de Paris
Rennes (Ille-et-Vilaine)
France

The Lotus is very comfortable and Aunt George has been well-behaved.

We saw the coast of Corsica up close. It is a very pretty and wild region.

I send you my love,

Antoinette

le Lotus

CARTE POSTALE 26 mai 17.

Mon cher petit René,

Tu reconnaîtras, dans cette photographie, le Lotus qui m'a amené à Saigon. Vue prise à B. où nous avons dû passer 48 heures, après le torpillage de l'E.S. La petite pétoire qui est à l'avant a tiré pendant la traversée, mais simplement pour exercices.

Bonne santé à tous. A maman et à toi, mes meilleurs baisers.

François

Saigon 26 May 1917

My dear little René,

You will recognise the Lotus in this photograph, which brought me to Saigon. View from B., where we had to spend 48 hours after the torpedoing of the E.S. The small cannon at the front fired during the crossing, but simply for practice.

Good health to all. To mother and to you, my best wishes.

François

CARTE POSTALE

Malte le 11 mars

Chers amis

Je vous met pour vous donnés de mes nouvelle et pour vous dire que je suis toujour en bonne santé et pour vous dire que je pars bientot arrivés en France je ne vous plus rien a vous dire pour le moment je vous en dirai davantage en France votre ami devoué Romain

ASSOCIATION DES DAMES FRANÇAISES
HOPITAL AUXILIAIRE
DU TERRITOIRE N° 204
MARSEILLE

BOUCHES-DU-RHONE

M

Henri Dieuzaide
à Lagny par
Montastruc
Deux Sèvres

Malta 11 March 1918

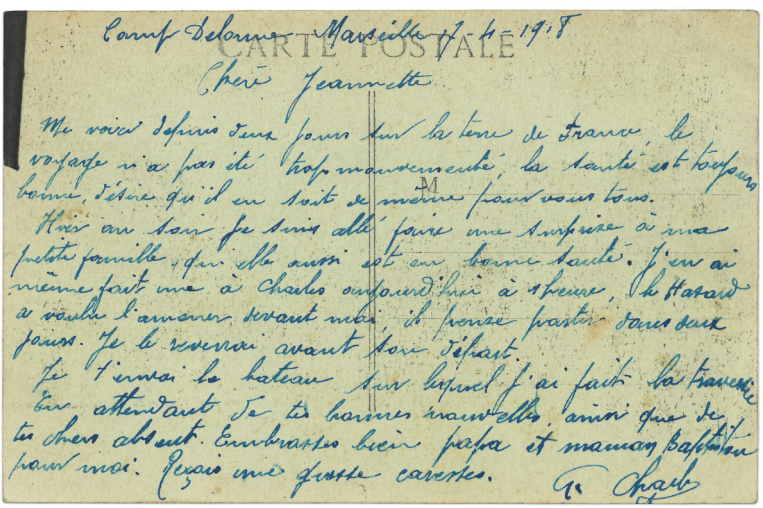
Mr. and Mrs. Henri Dremgard
Pugny via Moncoutant
Deux-Sèvres

Dear friends,

Two words to give you some news from me and to tell you that I am still in good health and to inform you that I hope to arrive in France soon. I have nothing else to tell you for the moment. I will share more once I am in France.

Your devoted friend,

Romain


Comp. Delorme Marseille 7-11-1918

CARTE POSTALE

Chère Jeannette

Me voici depuis deux jours sur la terre de France, le voyage n'a pas été trop mouvementé, la santé est toujours bonne, j'espère qu'il en soit de même pour vous tous.

Hier au soir je suis allé faire une surprise à ma petite famille qui elle aussi est en bonne santé. J'en ai même fait une à Charles aujourd'hui à 1 heure, le hasard a voulu l'amener devant moi, il prenait partir dans deux jours. Je le reverrai avant son départ.

Je t'envoi le bateau sur lequel j'ai fait la traversée. En attendant je te baise mes petites abeilles, ainsi que de tes chers absents. Embrasses bien papa et maman Baptistin pour moi. Reçois une grosse caresse.

Ton Charles

Marseille 17 April 1918

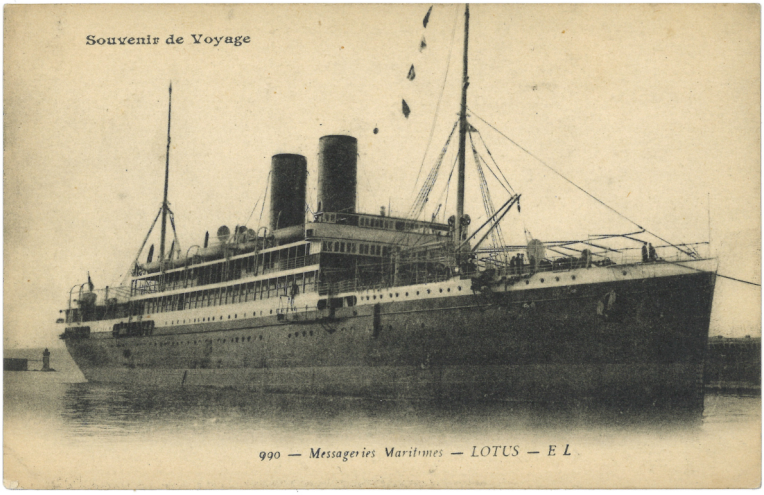
Dear Jeanette,

Here I am, it has been two days that I have been on French soil. The trip was not too eventful, my health is still good, I hope the same is true for everyone else too.

Yesterday night I went to surprise my small family and they are also in good health. I also surprised Charles today at one, destiny brought him before me and he is thinking of leaving in two days. I will see him again before his departure.

I am sending the ship that I took for my voyage. I shall await your good news and your regards. Please kiss your dear mother and father for me.

Sending you my love.


Souvenir de Voyage
990 — Messageries Maritimes — LOTUS — E L

CARTE POSTALE

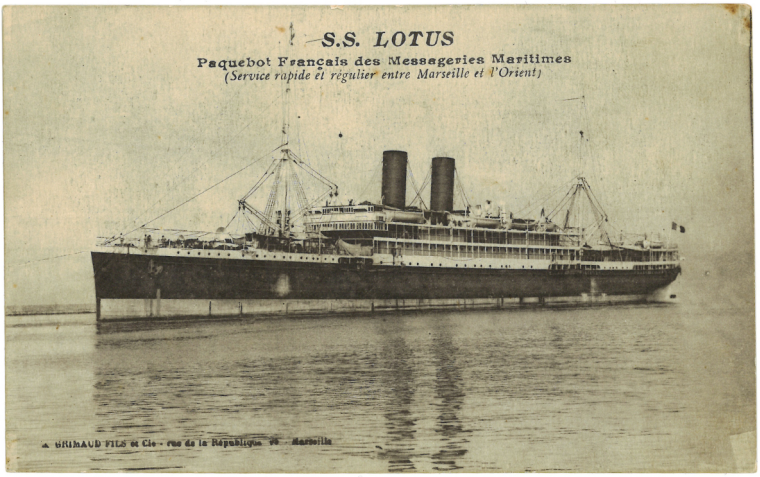
Marseille 15 June 1918

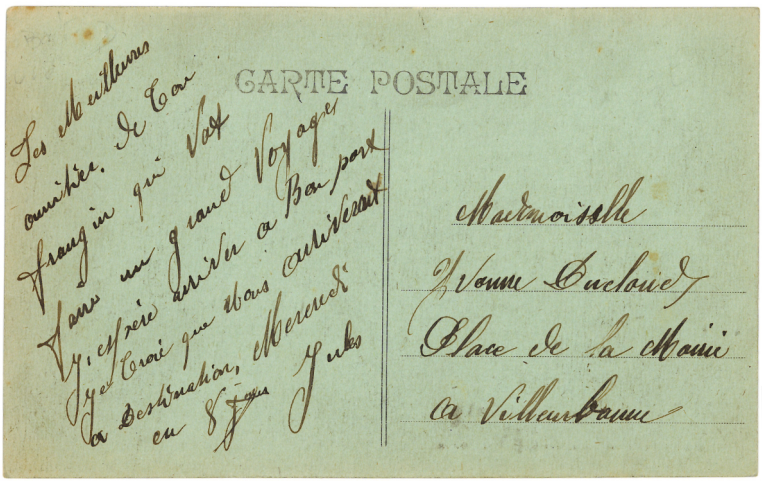
My dear Sister,

The great departure is set for tonight. The weather is wonderful. I hope to have a good voyage. I will let you know if we stop in G. I will be travelling with the L.

I embrace you affectionately.

Your brother who loves you.


S.S. LOTUS
Paquebot Français des Messageries Maritimes
(Service rapide et régulier entre Marseille et l'Orient)
GRIMAUD FILS et Cie - rue de la République 26 Marseille


CARTE POSTALE
Les Meilleures
amitiées. De Cor
Jraug in qui Vat
Dans un grand Voyage
Y, c'est pris service a Bar pour
Je t'écrit que vous arriverait
la Destination, Mercredi
ou 8 Jeudi
Jules
Mademoiselle
Jeanne Duclouet
Place de la Mairie
a Villeurbanne

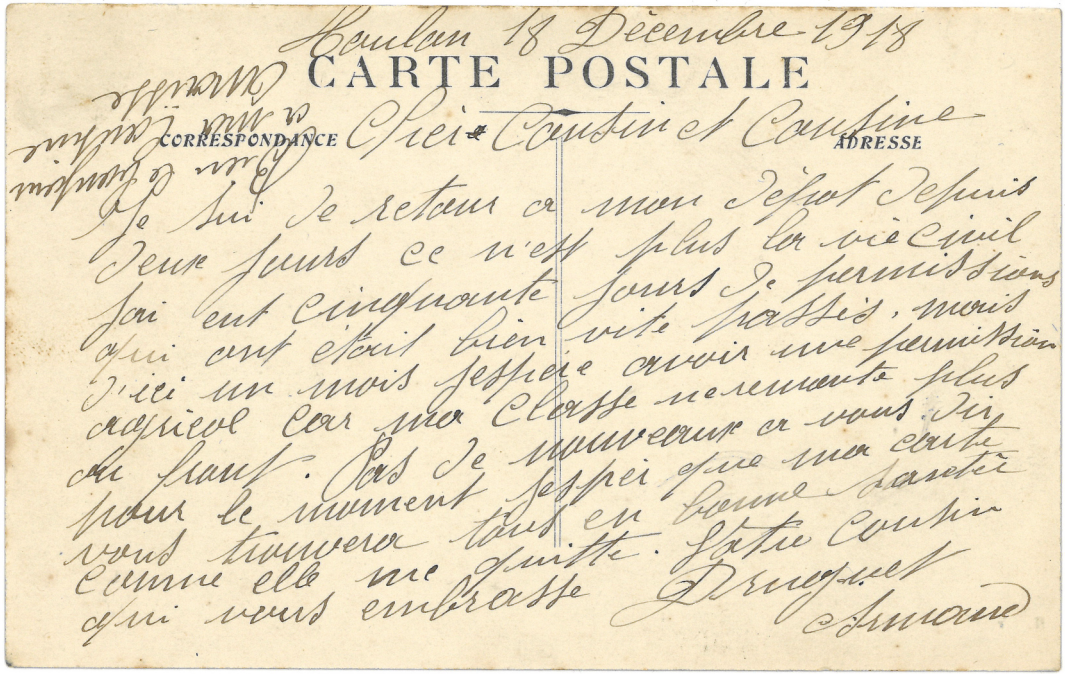
On the Lotus 1918

Miss Yvonne Ducloier
Place de la Mairie
Villeurbanne

The best wishes from your brother who is leaving to undertake a great journey.

I hope to arrive in port soon. I believe that we will get to our destination on Wednesday, in 8 days.

Jules



Coulon 18 Décembre 1918

CARTE POSTALE

CORRESPONDANCE

Mes chers Cousin et Cousine

ADRESSE

Je suis de retour de mon dernier depuis deux jours ce n'est plus la vie civil j'ai eut cinquante jours de permission bien vite passés, mais j'ici un mois j'espère avoir une permission régulier car ma Classe normement plus du tout. Pas de nouveaux et vous dis pour le moment j'espère que ma carte vous trouvera tous en bonne santé comme elle me quitte. Votre Cousin qui vous embrasse Bruguet Antoine

Garlan 18 December 1918

Dear cousins,

I have been back at my base for two days already and it is really nothing like civil life. I had a permit for fifty days of leave that went by very quickly, but a month from now I hope to have some additional time off since my class is not really needed anymore. No other news at the moment, I am hoping that my letter will find you in as good health as it leaves me.

With love from your cousin.

Druguet Armand

CARTE POSTALE

6 août 19

Chère Ninette, chers parents,
Je vous écris à bord du Dotois qui va partir dans quelques instants et avant de quitter la France je vous envoie mes meilleurs baisers
Votre Paul

Bateau 2e H/H

RÉGION DE MARSEILLE COMMISSION MILITAIRE Marseille

Monsieur Jurionnet

École Normale d'Instituteurs

Dom-le-Sauniers

Jura

8 8 19

84

On the Lotus 6 August 1919

Mr. Maisomenade
École Normale d'Instituteurs
Lons-le-Saunier
Jura

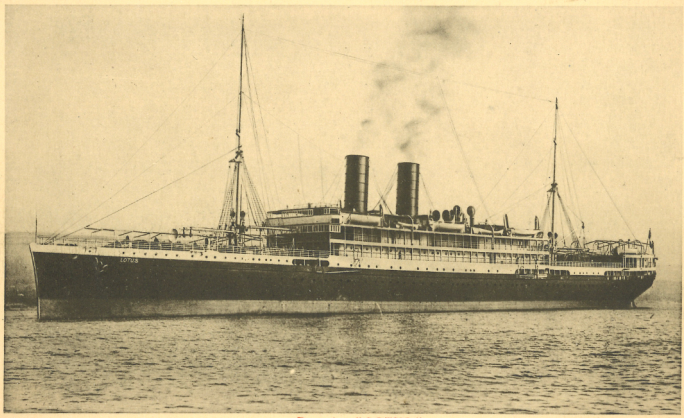
Dear Ninette, dear parents,

I am writing to you from aboard the Lotus that will leave in just a few moments, and before I leave France I send you my love.

Your Paul

I received Germaine's letter concerning the aggregate exams. In 1920, will they be in July? I thought they were at the beginning of the year?

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES



Paquebot " LOTUS "

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

CARTE POSTALE

1

Marseille le 7/7/

Chère Maman. & Cher Papa —

Ma journée a été bien remplie comme vous allez en juger : Ce matin je suis allé à bord du Lotus où j'ai vu le commandant et Mr autres officiers. Le commandant nous a envoyé au siège de la compagnie demander le rangées des cabines, j'étais avec le grand Sait — en passant devant la mairie il a fait mettre à jour son fascicule —. A la compagnie impossible de se faire recevoir du commandant l'unit

F. Detaille, édit. Marseille

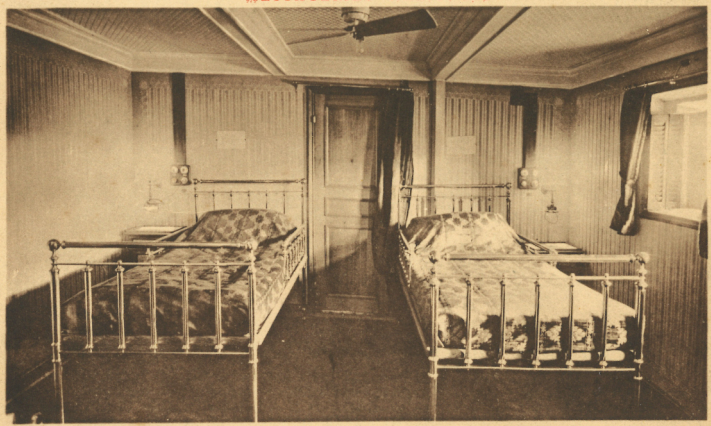
On the Lotus 6 October 1919

Card: 1/2

Dear Mother and Father,

My day was quite full, as you will be able to attest: this morning, I went aboard the Lotus where I met the captain and all the other officers. The captain sent us to the company's headquarters so we could ask about the number of cabins. I was with the great Said when we passed by the marina and he updated his papers. It was impossible to get Captain Fauïet to see us at La Compagnie.

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES



" LOTUS " — Cabine de grand luxe

C574 774 906

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

CARTE POSTALE

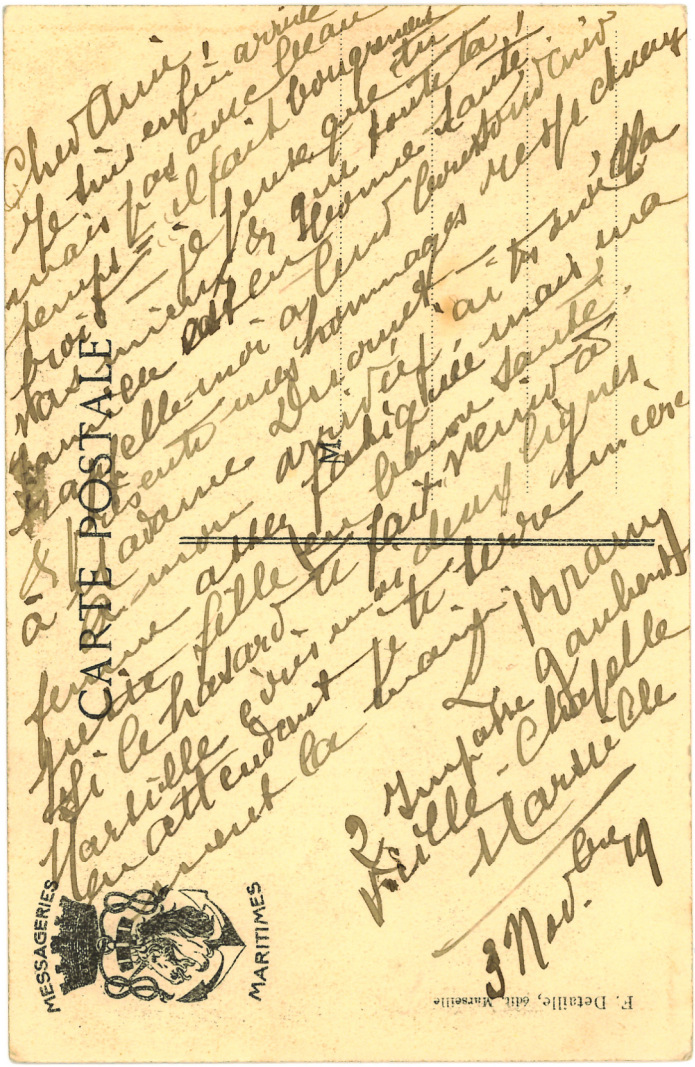
Le directeur actuel de la Compagnie, nous allons au bureau des passages - l'employé nous dit de revenir le Soir - nous rencontrons le commandant du Lotus dans le Hall de la compagnie qui juient m'envoie demander immédiatement le numéros de nos cabines - Nous avons été servi dans toute nous logerons dans la même partie du paquebot et ce sont je crois des couchettes de première classe - De la Sary et moi nous nous allé voir le Directeur de l'Ecole qui a été bayaux a ses navigateurs et nous a prié de lui envoyer des cartes postales aux des Temples

M

F. Detuille édit. Marseille

Card: 2/2

The current director of La Compagnie took us to the passenger office. The employee told us to come in the evening. We met the captain of the Lotus in the hall of La Compagnie who, furious, immediately sent me to find out the number of our cabins. We will not be alone, we are in the same part of the liner and they are, I believe, first-class cabins. Next, we went to see the President of the School who said hello to his navigators and asked us to send him some postcards with stamps.


CARTE POSTALE
MESSAGERIES MARITIMES
F. Detaille, édit. Marseille

Marseille 3 November 1919

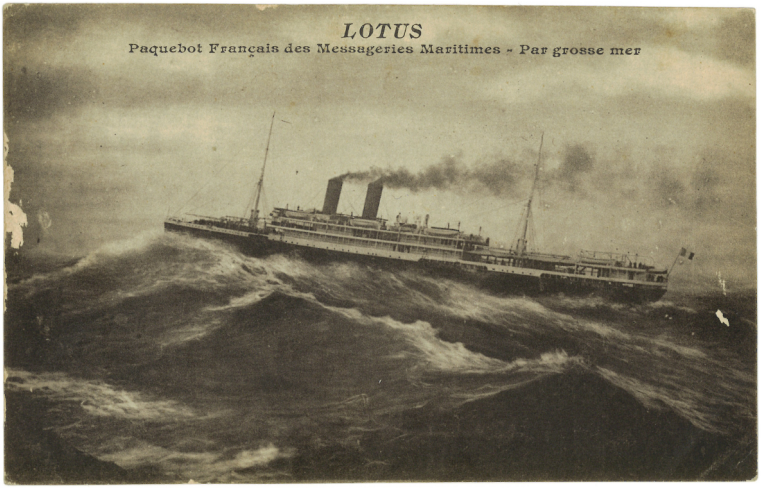
Dear friend,

I have finally arrived, although the weather has not been good. It is very cold here. I hope that you are doing better and that your whole family is in good health. Write to me at the address below and convey my respectful regards to Madam Ducruet.

Upon my arrival, I found my wife quite tired, although my daughter is in good health. If by chance you should find yourself in Marseille, write me a few lines.

Meanwhile, I send you my best wishes.

2 Impasse Gaubert
Vielle-Chapelle
Marseille


LOTUS
Paquebot Français des Messageries Maritimes - Par grosse mer

CARTE POSTALE
A ma fille
ma plus tendre pensée.
Baisers affectueux.
Charlin
L'Officier
d'Administration
Commandant
DÉTACHEMENT D'ÉPINAL (1ER B.A.)
Mlle Céline Charlin
Boulangerie
Brignoles
(Var)

On the Lotus 1920

Miss Céline Charlin
Bakery
Brignoles
Var

To my daughter,

My most tender thoughts.

Fond kisses.

↑ Georges Clemenceau (seated) in 1920. It is unclear whether the ship in the background is the *Lotus*. © George Grantham Bain Collection (Library of Congress).

You can access the two film recordings related to Clemenceau's journey on the *Lotus* to Egypt and back to France by scanning the QR code.

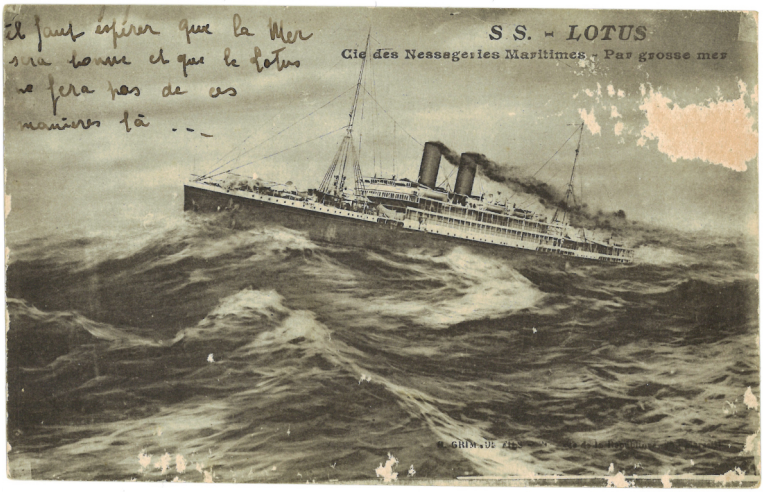
Marseille 2 February 1920

Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929) was Prime Minister of France from 1906 to 1909 and again from 1917 to 1920. He is best known for leading France during the final years of the First World War and for representing the country at the Paris Peace Conference. Trained as a physician, Clemenceau devoted much of his early life to political activism and journalism, which helped establish his reputation as one of the most influential figures in French public life.

Clemenceau travelled aboard the *Lotus* twice in 1920: first on a voyage from France to Egypt (2 February 1920) and later on his return journey from Egypt to France (4 May 1920).

No written account of Clemenceau's voyage aboard the *Lotus* survives. But since Clemenceau's departure occasioned the presence of the press, the journey resulted in the only two known film recordings of the *Lotus*.

You can access these clips by scanning the QR code (left) with your phone.



Il faut espérer que la Mer sera bonne et que le Lotus ne fera pas de ces manières là ...

De bons baisers a Marseille 17-3-8 Et un bonjour toute la famille

CARTE POSTALE

à la famille Marchais

sans oublier ma grand mère et ma Tante Rosette

Chère mère

Me voilà bientôt au moment de quitter Marseille. nous embarquons dans 2 heures: à présent chère mère ne sais pas aujourd'hui si tu est quelques jours sans nouvelles: car je ne pourrais t'écrire que quand je serais rendu. A présent il paraît que le bateau fait escale à Alexandrie: si c'est possible je t'écrirai là. De dessus je vais te quitter je ne vais plus rien de nouveau: Dans l'espoir que ma carte te trouve toujours en meilleure santé: je t'embrasse bien fort ton petit fils - Gaston

Marseille 17 March 1920

I hope the sea will be good and the Lotus willing to cooperate.

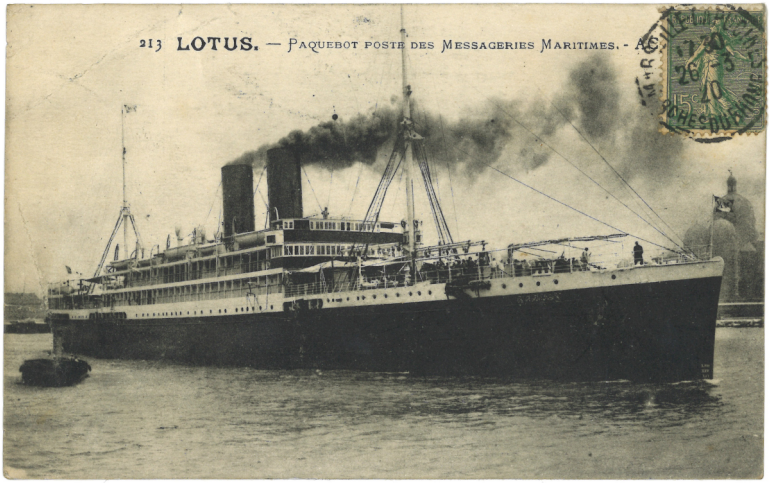
Dear mother,

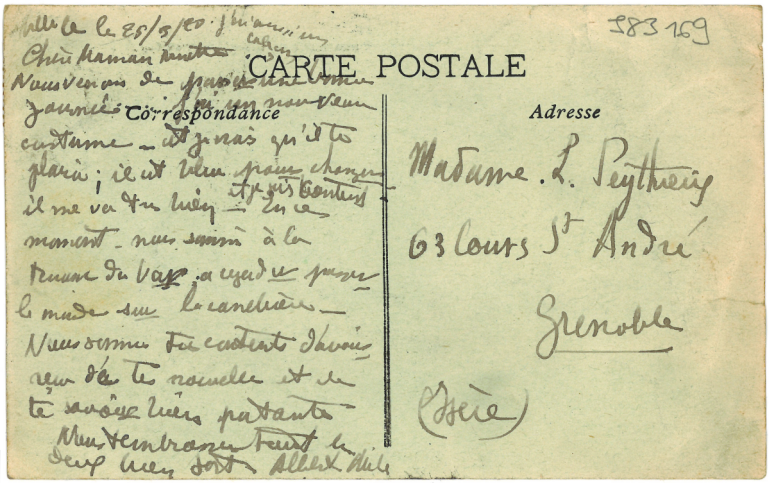
Here I am, soon about to leave Marseille. We board in 2 hours. For now, dear mother, do not worry if you do not receive any news for a couple of days, since I will only be able to write to you once I have arrived. At the moment, it seems that the ship Lotus will stop in Alexandria, and it is possible I might write to you from there. On this note, I must leave you. I have nothing new to add. Hoping that this card finds you in better health. Sending you a big kiss.

Your little son,

Gaston

Please send my love to the entire family, without forgetting my grandmother and my aunt Rosette. And say hello to the Marchand family.


213 LOTUS. — Paquebot poste des Messageries Maritimes. -


CARTE POSTALE
Correspondance
Adresse
Madame L. Peythieu
63 Cours St André
Grenoble
(Isère)

Marseille 25 March 1920

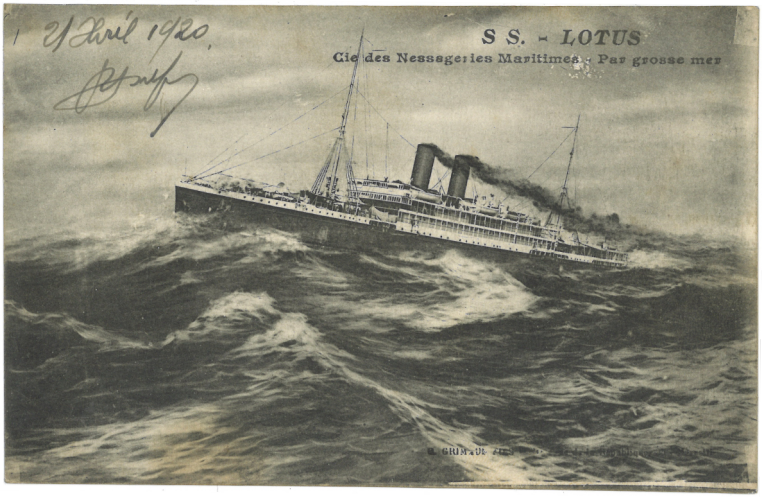
Mrs. L. Peythieu
63 Cours St. André
Grenoble
Isère

We just had a wonderful day. I have a new suit that I think you will like, it is blue for a change. There is no need to make any alterations to it, it suits me very well and I am happy. Now we are on the Var and we will spend the evening on the Canebière.

We are very happy to have received news from you and to learn that you are in good health.

We both send you our love.

Albert



1 2/ Avril 1920.

8405

Le 2/ Avril 1920

CARTE POSTALE

Ma gros Loulou

J'ai été embarqué M.? Debouille, mais il faut seulement dire que le paquebot n'a pas pu partir au lieu de 10 h 1/2 il ne part que demain matin à 5 h. J'ai visité la rade, nous avons occupé ensemble elle est très bien. C'est vraiment un beau bateau ainsi que le temps on juge par la photo. Faisons les de nouvelles à leur arrivée. Je t'embrasse bien fort et à bientôt.

On the Lotus 21 April 1920

My big Loulou,

I had embarked on the Mt Pehoulle, but there is so much wind that the ship was unable to leave this morning at four thirty. It will only leave tomorrow at five in the morning. I visited the cabin where we will be staying together and it looks good. It is truly a beautiful ship, as you can see from the photo.

Still no news of my return.

Sending you my love and see you soon.

Marseille 24/11.

Bouvelly, 22 rue de l'Etrier, Marseille

W 687

Correspondance

CARTE POSTALE

Adresse

Ma chère Blanche

Je ne vous écris qu'un petit mot aujourd'hui, pour vous dire combien je vis de cœur avec vous. Je comprends votre chagrin, et le partage. — J'ai reçu votre gentille carte et vous en remercie bien. Toute la famille vous envie aussi Henri qui n'est pas venu. Il a dû être très occupé, car, comme il a dû vous l'écrire on a déclamé "Lotus" qui, par conséquent ne part pas demain. Si j'avais su l'hôtel où descendait Henri je serais allé le voir avec Lenice. Je pense vous voir demain et je vous écris vite.

Toutes les femmes ont le même cœur, aussi je devine tout ce que dit votre pauvre Blanche. Je t'embrasse bien tendrement de ma part et de celle de Lenice

Marguerite

Marseille 24 November 1920

My dear Blanche,

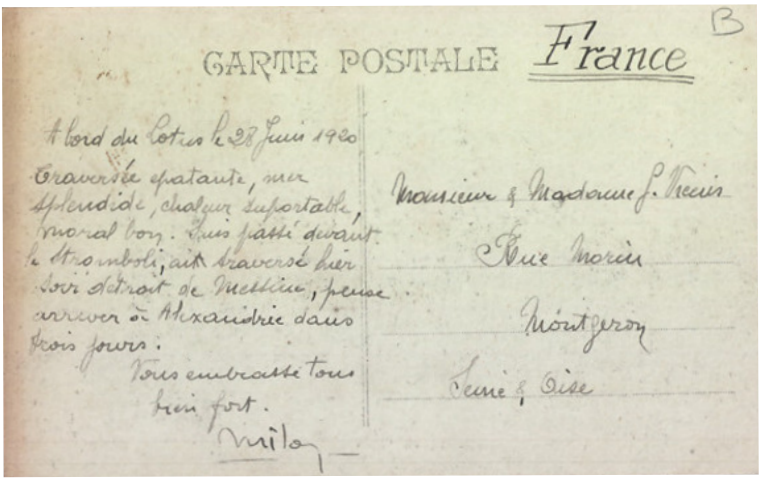
I am writing only a few words to tell you that my heart is with you. I understand your sorrow and I share it. I received your kind letter and I thank you for it. We waited all day for René, who never came. He must have been very angry because, as he must have written to you, we boarded the Lotus which, by chance, does not leave tomorrow. If I had known which hotel René was staying at, I would have gone to see him with Léonore.

I will go to see your husband tomorrow and then write to you swiftly.

All women have the same heart, and I can imagine what yours must be feeling, my poor Blanche.

I send you my warmest wishes, as well as Léonore's.

Marguerite


CARTE POSTALE France

B

A bord du Lotus le 28 Juin 1920

Traversée épatante, mer splendide, chaleur supportable, moral bon. Puis passé devant le Stromboli, ait traversé hier soir détroit de Messine, pense arriver à Alexandrie dans trois jours.

Vous embrasse tous bien fort.

Milou

Monsieur & Madame J. Trecis

Rue Marin

Montgeron

Seine & Oise

On the Lotus 28 June 1920

Mr. and Mrs. J. Vrecin
Rue Morin
Montgeron
Seine-et-Oise

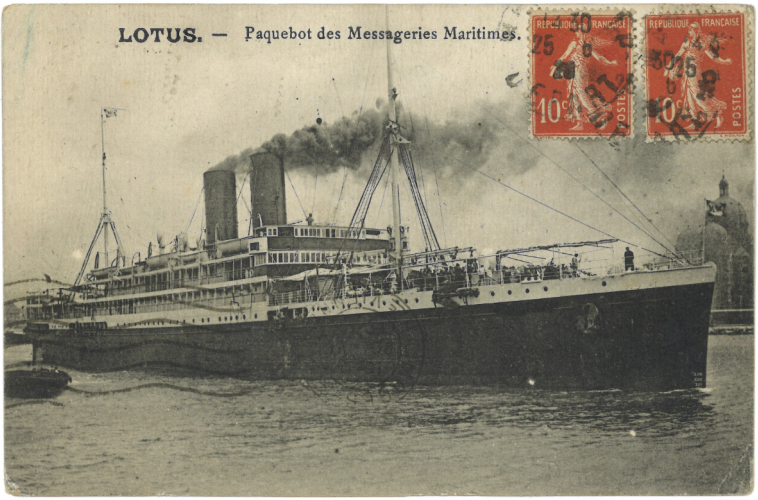
My cabin is somewhere around here.

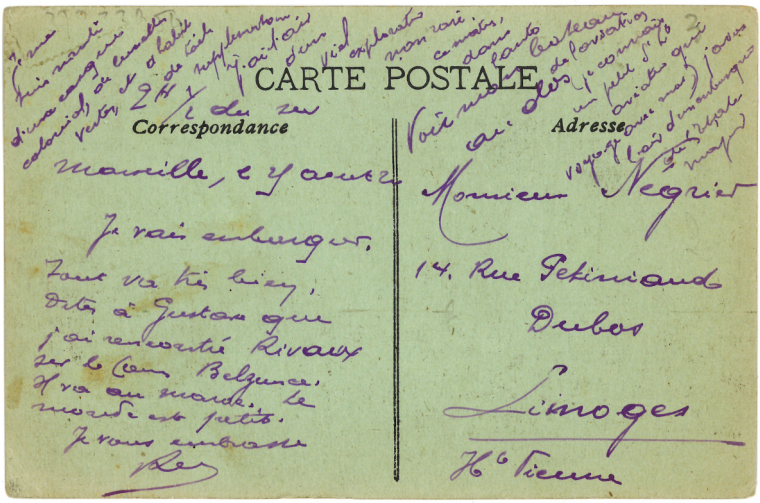
On the Lotus, on 28 June 1920.

Stunning passage, splendid sea, bearable heat, in good spirits. I passed by the Stromboli, last night we crossed the Strait of Messina. Think we will arrive in Alexandria in three days.

Sending you all lots of love,

Milan


LOTUS. — Paquebot des Messageries Maritimes.
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
POSTES
10c


CARTE POSTALE
Correspondance
Adresse
Monsieur Negrier
14, Rue Pétiniaud
Dubos
Limoges

Marseille 29 August 1920

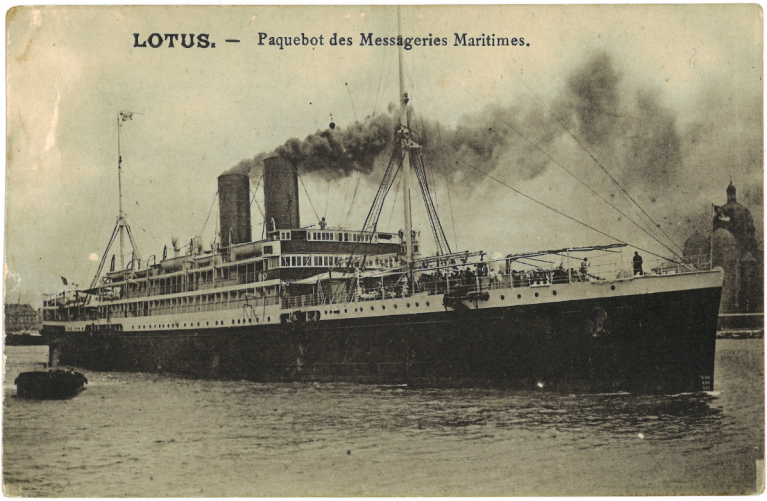
Mr. Negrier
14 Rue Pétiniaud-Dubos
Limoges
Haute-Vienne

I bought myself a colonial hat from the second-hand market and also a well-fitted suit. I looked like a real explorer this morning in the aviator's car (I know S.B. a little, he is an aviator who is travelling with me), I really looked like an explorer.

See my ship on the back.

I am about to board. Everything is going well. Tell Gustave that I met Rivaux in Belsunce Square, he was going to the market. The world is small.

Sending you my love.



CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance

Partis à bord de ce bateau le 16 Sept. 1920. Assez bonne traversée espérons qu'il en sera de même au retour

A Moret.

2

Adresse

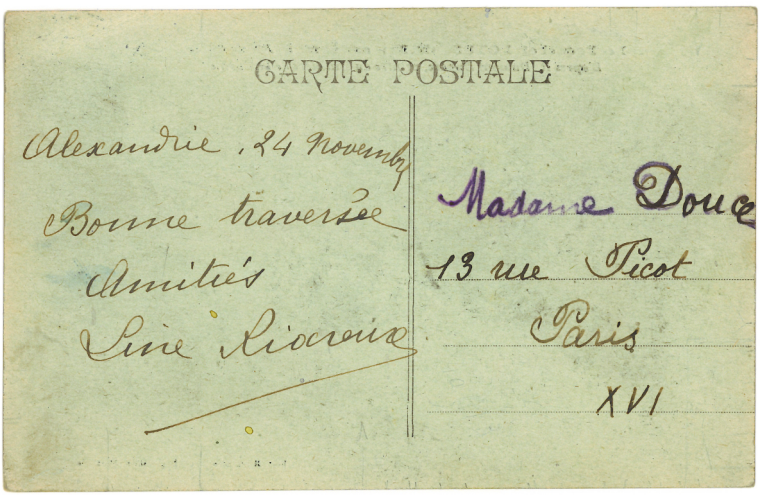
Reçus 1916 / 1917

Alexandria 16 September 1920

I left aboard this ship on 16 September 1920. Fairly good crossing. Hope it will be the same for the return.

A. Moret

Le Paquebot LOTUS. (M.M.) arrivant à Alexandrie
D'après R. Dumont Duparc, peintre du Ministère de la Marine
EGYPTE
POSTAGE


CARTE POSTALE
Alexandrie, 24 Novembre
Bonne traversée
Amitiés
Line Lioreux
Madame Douce
13 rue Tilsit
Paris
XVI

Alexandria 24 November 1920

Mrs. Douce
13 rue Picot
Paris, 14th arrondissement

Had a good crossing.

Best wishes,

Line Rixeuse

Le "LOTUS"
Courrier d'Egypte et Syrie quittant Beyrouth
D'Après R. Dumont Dup rc, peintre u Ministère de la Marine
Edit. Baralon Boulevard Dugommier

Beirut 6 December 1920

Length - 148 metres
Speed - 21 knots

See you soon, a long letter with news from St Michel d'Abey.

Dear friend,

A few words to give you my news. I arrived at the destination yesterday morning without many difficulties, except for Sunday 29th which was much worse than what this letter can describe.

The waves crashed over the deck. Aside from this, the trip was rather interesting. This letter will give you a sense of our journey. I passed by the Gulf of Lion, Corsica, the Vesuvius volcano, the Stromboli volcano which was erupting, the Strait of Messina which was the nicest crossing after two days of bad weather.

Afterwards, the boat stopped in Alexandria (Egypt). I visited this city, it was nothing impressive, apart from the European neighbourhood.

Guillotte 45e d'Infanterie
en subsistance
au 4e Bn
secteur postal
600

Beyrouth le 6-12-20

à bientôt
une longue
lettre de ma
vieille de ce
début de
mois

Cher camarade

Quelques mots pour te donner de mes nouvelles. je suis arriver à destination hier matin. sans trop de difficultés a part la journée du dimanche 28 qui a été une journée plus terrible que celle que represente la carte les vagues passaient pardessus le pont. a part ça le voyage est assez interressant. par ta carte tu pourras te rendre compte du voyage. j'ai passer par le golfe du lion la Corse le volcan vesuve le Volcan Stromboli qui était en eruption le détroit de Messine passage le plus joli de la traversée après ce passage 2 jours de grosse mer ensuite le bateau c'est 2 jours a Alexandrie (Egypte) j'ai visité cette ville ce n'est pas épatant a part le quartier Européen 1 jours après il c'est arrêter a Port Said ville beaucoup moins grande mais plus jolie ensuite je suis arriver a Beyrouth ville assez interessante. il faut que je te dise aussi que sur le bateau j'avait un petit filon assez interessant j'était garçon de table au salon de 3e je t'assure que je n'avai rien je couchai dans un bon lit tandis que les copains couchai dans la cale.

Maintenant j'ai demandé a rentrer dans la musique du 415 mais c'est très difficile je ne sais pas si je réussirai - plus rien de nouveau à t'apprendre ton copain qui te serre la main de loin Abel

CARTE POSTALE

One day later, we stopped at Port Saïd which was a smaller city, but nicer. Finally, I arrived in Beirut which is an interesting city.

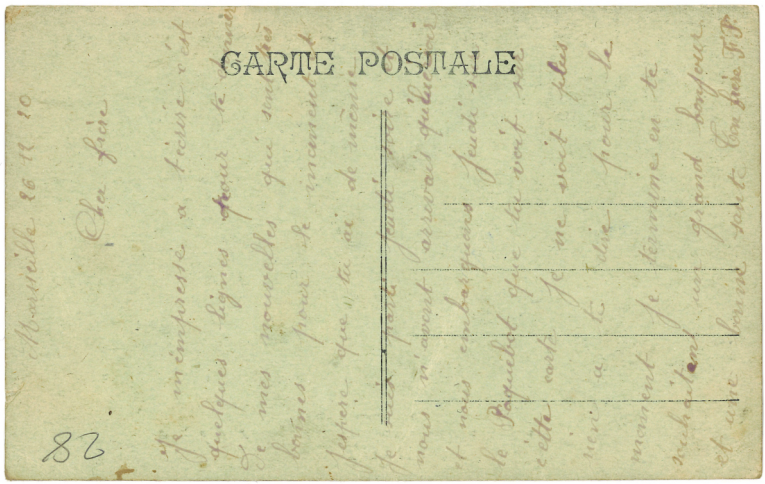
I should also tell you that during my trip I had a small job that was very interesting. I was a waiter in 3rd class. I can assure you I lived well, I slept on a nice bed while my friends slept in the cargo hold.

Now, I hope I can return to the band of the 415th regiment, but it is very difficult. I do not know if I will be able to make it. I have nothing else new to share.

Your friend who is shaking your hand from afar,

Abel

S.S. LOTUS
Paquebot Français des Messageries Maritimes
Par grosse mer


CARTE POSTALE

Marseille 26 December 1920

Dear brother,

I rush to write you these few lines to give you news from me which is all very good for the moment, and I hope that yours is as well. I departed on Thursday evening and we only arrived yesterday evening, and we will be boarding the ship that you see on this card on Thursday evening. There is nothing else to say at the moment. I am wrapping up by wishing you a good day and good health.

Your brother,

F. P.

Damas, fort Gouraud. le 15/1/24

Mes chers Parents.

Quelques mots seulement pour vous dire bonjour, je suis à Damas au fort Gouraud depuis 2 jours. J'espère recevoir l'autre chez du Roman, 420 tmo. que je ne connaissais pas, j'espère y voir encore une bonne ~~[illegible]~~ de jours en attendant d'aller à la corvée de Damas prendre le commandement d'une section. Je suis très surpris de ne pas avoir de vos nouvelles, c'est vrai que les communications ~~[illegible]~~ à Damas est coupée depuis quelques jours. Rien de bien nouveau par ici, est-ce pas que de votre côté ? Bien le bonjour à tous, j'espère recevoir un bon de vos nouvelles. Jules

J.L. 610

Fort Gouraud, 15 January 1921
Damascus, Syria

Dear parents,

A few words just to say hello. I am now in Damascus at Fort Gouraud for two days so that I can receive instruction on the 120 gun. Afterwards I do not know, maybe I will visit another thirty bakeries while waiting to go into the service of Damascus, take command and want to stay there.

I am very surprised not to have heard from you, it was Naji who told me your news. The Beirut-Damascus route has been suspended following several incidents. Nothing much new here, and what is going on there?

Looking forward to receiving your news soon.

S.L 610

Marseille le 24 janvier 1921

103

CARTE POSTALE

Chers Parents

Correspondance **Adresse**

Deux mots pour vous donner de mes nouvelles qui sont toujours très bonne et vous désire de même. Hier j'ai passés ma journée au bord de la mer et j'ai visiter le port et puis j'ai vue des Bâteaux et puis pas des petits. Je ne sais encore pas quand l'on partiras c'est sûrement cette semaine mais je ne puis vous dirent quelle jours et puis il ne faut pas vous tourmenter car maintenant pour couler un bâteau il faut une tempête Démonter et encore alors ne vous tourmenter pas vous avez sûrement reçue de mes nouvelles il y a pas longtemps car je vous est écrit plusieurs fois Depuis que je suis ici et je n'est pas eu de vos nouvelles depuis aujourd'hui 8 jours mais je compte bien en avoir aujourd'hui j'espère que je ne me tourmente pas je ne voit pas grand chose à vous dire pour l'instant depuis 3 jours j'ai envoyer 10 cartes cela me passe le temps je termine en vous embrassant tous votre fils qui pense à vous Jean Rene

Pour l'instant l'on se laisse vivre l'on fait rien maintenant je vous écrirez quand je partirez et ne vous tourmentez pas

Jean Renoir

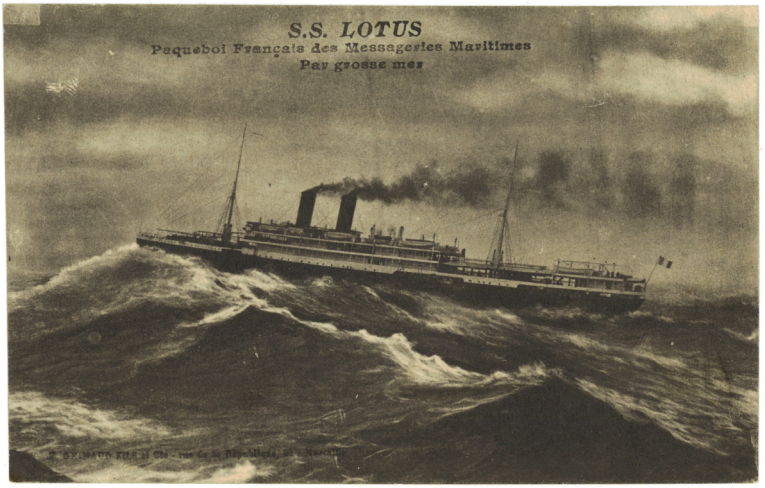
Marseille 24 January 1921

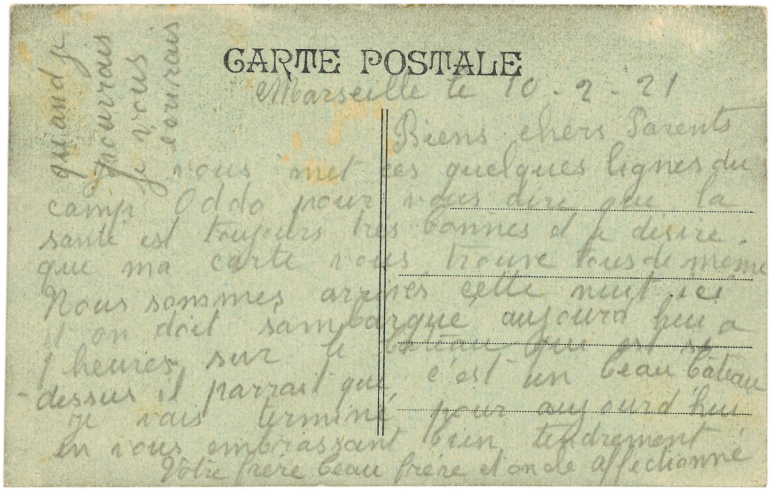
Dear parents,

Two words to share some news on my part which is good and I hope it is the same for you. Yesterday, I spent the day by the sea and I visited the ports and then I saw some ships which were not small. I still do not know when we will be leaving. It is certainly going to be this week, but I am not able to specify the day and, plus, you should not torment yourself because these days, it takes a crazy storm and then some to sink a ship. So please do not worry. You have certainly received news from me not too long ago, considering that I have written to you multiple times since I arrived here. I have not received anything from you for eight days, but I hope to receive it today. Still, I am not worried and I do not have much to tell you at the moment since I have sent 10 cards in the past three days. It is one way to pass the time. I am finishing up by sending you all my love.

Your son who is thinking of you, Giraud René

At the moment, we are free to roam and we do nothing. Now, I will write to you once I depart and please do not worry, I will be fine.




CARTE POSTALE

Marseille le 10-2-21

Bien chers Parents

Je vous met ces quelques lignes du camp Oddo pour vous dire que la santé est toujours très bonne et je désire que ma carte vous trouve tous de même. Nous sommes arrivés cette nuit ici on doit sans barque aujourd'hui à 1 heures sur le [illegible] dessus il paraît que c'est un beau bateau je vais terminé pour aujourd'hui en vous embrassant bien tendrement

Votre frère beau frère et oncle affectionné

quand je recevrai vous écrirai

Camp Oddo 10 February 1921

Dear parents,

I am sending you a few lines from the Oddo Camp to tell you that my health is still good and I hope that my letter finds you likewise. We arrived here tonight and at 1 o'clock we will board the ship you see in the back. Apparently, it is a nice ship. I am going to wrap this up for now, sending you my dear love.

Your affectionate brother, brother-in-law and uncle.

Carte

Mardi 15 janvier 1921.
16h

Par 35° / 21°, en mer.
Arrivons à Alexandrie dans la nuit après traversée mouvementée plutôt dure.
N'avons pas vu la terre depuis le 11 matin. Retardés par vents, ne verrons Beyrouth que le 20 au matin.
Sommes tous en bonne santé n'oublions pas et pensons bien à vous.
Bons baisers. Alfred

Mme et Mr Jaquet. A.
1 rue du Fort 1
Malakoff
Seine

ALEXANDRIE
16 JAN 21

France

On the Lotus 19 February 1921

Mrs. and Mr. Jaquet
1 rue du Fort 1
Malakoff, Seine
France

2nd card
Tuesday, February 19, 1921
4 o'clock, var. 35°/21°, at sea

A souvenir from Alexandria at night after a rather bad, rather tough crossing.

We have not seen land since the morning of the 11th. Delayed by winds, we will not see Beirut until the morning of the 20th.

We are nevertheless all in good health, we are thinking of you and we send our love.

Warm wishes.

Le Paquebot "LOTUS" M M
arrivant à Alexandrie
D'après R. Dumont Dupare, peintre du Ministère de la Marine

CHEQUE
OUVERTURE
25
REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
Miss Ellen B. Landis,
Lititz,
Penna,
U. S. A.

On the Lotus 26 June 1921

Miss Ellen B. Landis
Lititz
Pennsylvania
USA

Dear Ellen,

Am on my way home and hope to soon be there if nothing prevents. We left Beirut June 18th and due in Marseilles tomorrow a.m. Due to sail from Havre July 6th. Hope to be there and see you soon. Had only a little rough weather and I never missed a meal, ha! So prepare for me, ha!

As ever,

Chris

CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance

Adresse

Bourlay, 22 rue de l'Evêché, Marseille

Marseille le 4 août 1911

Cher Papa et chère Maman.

C'est moi qui vient vous donner de nos nouvelles qui ne peuvent être meilleures. Notre petite femme est couchée elle est bien sage mais a fait la fatigue. Elle se porte comme un charme. Il n'y a pas de lait et pourtant ne pleure plus maman. Louise et moi sommes également heureux et puisque il y a déjà 2 jours que la vue il n'y a aucune raison pour qu'il ne fera pas aimi. Jusqu'ici nous nous portons bien tous les deux. Nous pensons rentrer samedi soir; nous irons vous voir tous les deux dimanche. Bons baisers à tous au parrain à Raoul et au petits sans. Vos deux grands vous embrasse bien fort Louise Je vous embrasse tous Marie Louise

Marseille 4 August 1921

We are sending you a photo of the ship we visited.

Dear Dad and dear Mum,

It is me writing to give you our news, which could not be better. My little wife is in bed; she is quite tired, but apart from that fatigue, she is in perfect health.

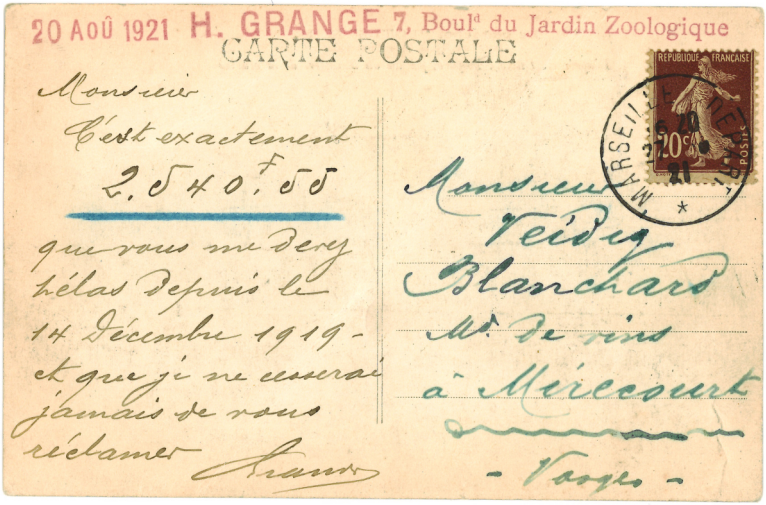
Do not worry yourselves, and above all, do not cry anymore, Mum - Louise and I are blissfully happy, and since it has already been two days and all is well, there is no reason it should not remain so until our golden wedding anniversary. We expect to come home on Saturday evening; we will come to see you both on Sunday.

Best wishes to everyone, to godfather, to Raoul, and to the little sisters. Your two grown-ups send you love.

Charles

I send you my best wishes. Marie-Louise.

Le paquebot "LOTUS" M M.
arrivant à Alexandrie
D'après R. Dumont Dufaure, peintre du Ministère de la Marine

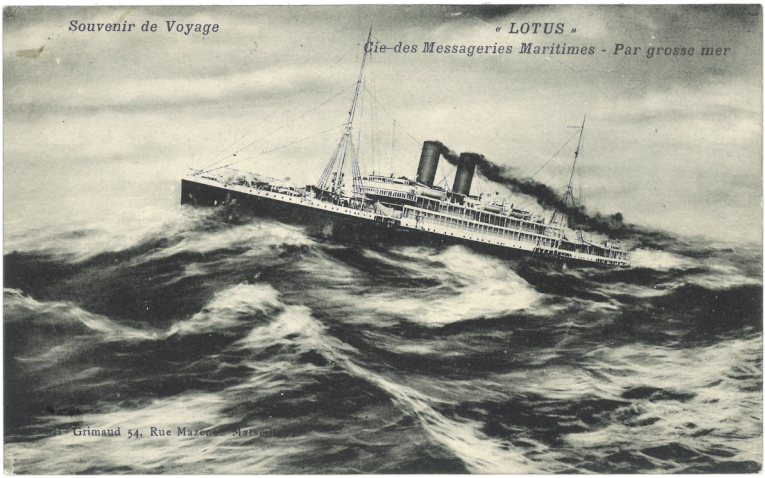

20 Août 1921 H. GRANGE 7, Boul^d du Jardin Zoologique
CARTE POSTALE
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
POSTE
Monsieur
C'est exactement
2.540.55
que vous me devez
hélas depuis le
14 Décembre 1919 -
et que je ne cesserai
jamais de vous
réclamer
Monsieur
Veidy
Blanchard
M^d de vins
à Mirecourt
- Vosges -

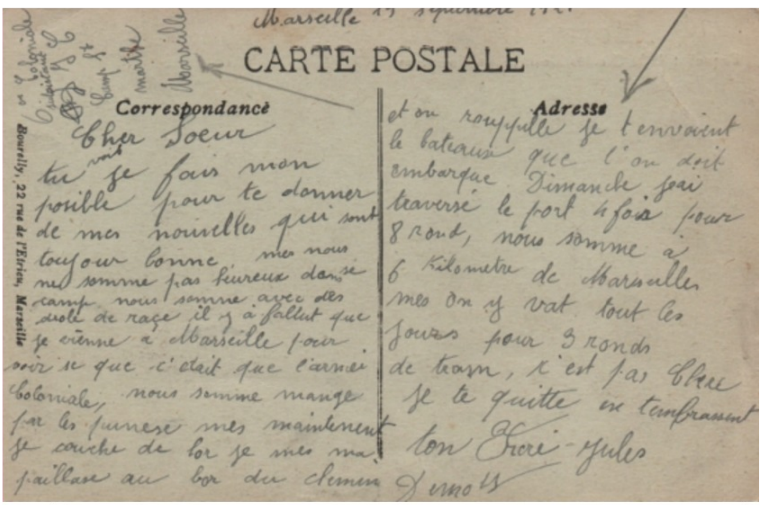
Marseille 20 August 1921

Mr. Veidéq Blanchard
Mrs. de Vins
Mirecourt
Vosges

Sir,

It is exactly 2,640.66 francs that you have owed me, unfortunately, since 14 December 1919, and that I will never stop claiming.


Souvenir de Voyage
« LOTUS »
Cie des Messageries Maritimes - Par grosse mer
Grimaud 54, Rue Mazenod Marseille


CARTE POSTALE
Correspondance
Adresse
Bourrelly, 22 rue de l'Evêché, Marseille

Marseille 19 September 1921

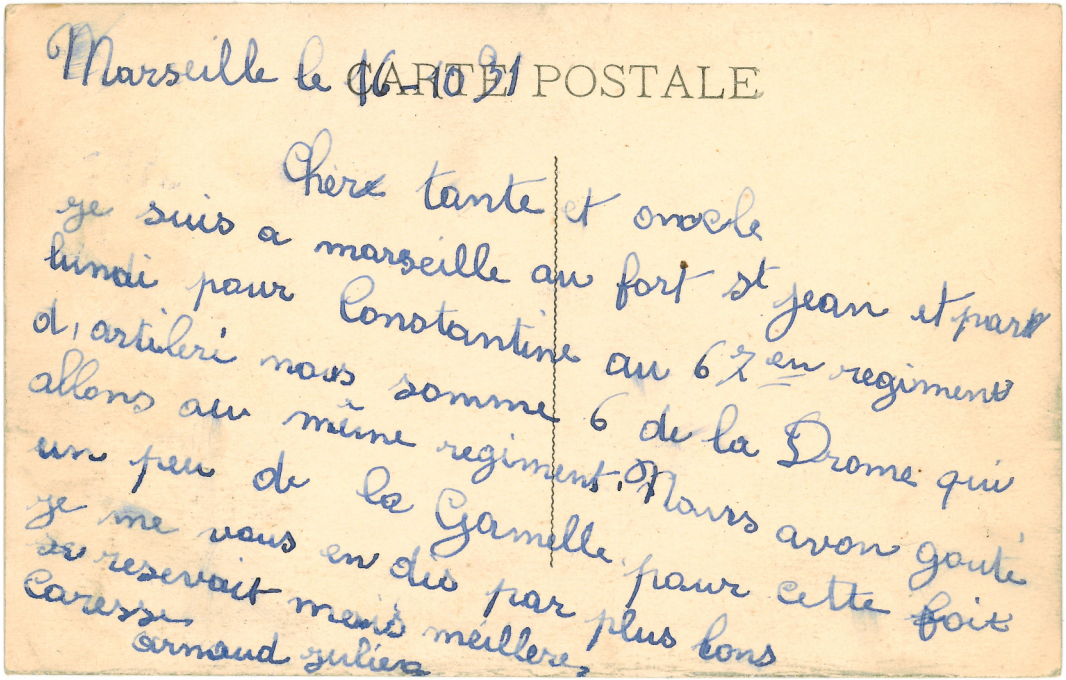
Dear sister,

You see, I am doing my best to send you news about me which is always good, but we are not happy in this camp. We are with strange races, I had to get to Marseille to see what the colonial army is truly like. We are being eaten by bedbugs, now I sleep on a straw mattress which I drag to the very edge of the room to rest. I am sending you the ship that we will board. On Sunday, I crossed the port four times for 8 rounds. We are 6 km from Marseille, but we go every day for 3 rounds of training. It is not fun.

I leave you here and send you my love.

Your dear,

Jules Demots



Marseille le 16-10-21

CARTE POSTALE

Chère tante et oncle
je suis a marseille au fort st jean et part
lundi pour Constantine au 6e en regiment
d'artileri nous sommes 6 de la Drome qui
allons au même regiment. Nous avon goute
un peu de la Gamelle pour cette fois
je ne vous en dis par plus bons
se reservait mes meilleurs
Caresse
arnaud julien

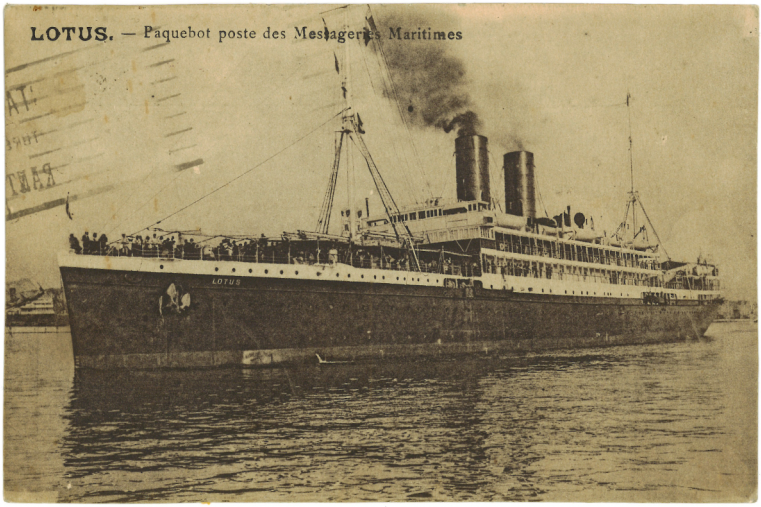
Marseille 16 October 1921

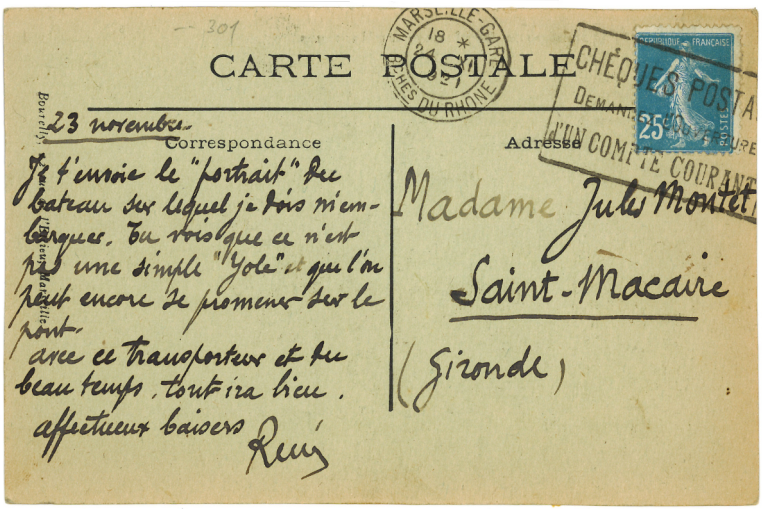
Dear Aunt and Uncle,

I am in Marseille at Fort Saint Jean and leaving on Monday for Constantine with the 67th Artillery Regiment. There are 6 of us from the Drôme going to the same regiment. We have had a taste of the mess tin. This time I will not tell you any more.

Please accept my best regards,

Arnaud Julien


LOTUS. — Paquebot poste des Messageries Maritimes
LOTUS


CARTE POSTALE
MARSEILLE-GARE
18
21
BOUCHES DU RHONE
CHÈQUES POSTA
DEMAN
D'UN COMPTE COURANT
25
23 novembre
Correspondance
Je t'envoie le "portrait" du bateau sur lequel je dois m'embarquer. Ce triolet ce n'est pas une simple "Yole" et que l'on peut encore se promener sur le pont.
avec ce transporteur et du beau temps, tout ira bien.
affectueux baisers
Rémy
Adresse
Madame Jules Monet
Saint-Macaire
(Gironde)

Marseille 23 November 1921

Mrs. Jules Montet
Saint-Macaire
Gironde

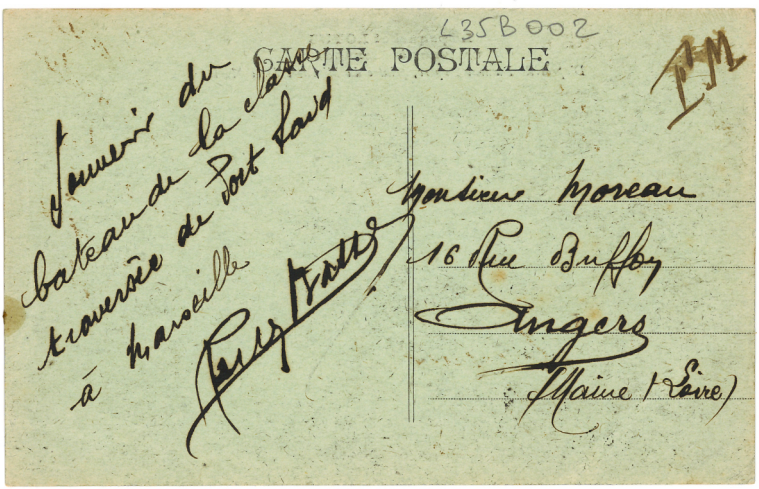
I am sending you a 'portrait' of the ship that I will be boarding. You see, it is not a simple 'yawl' and we can still walk around on the deck.

With this carrier and this nice weather, all will go well.

With love,

Rémy

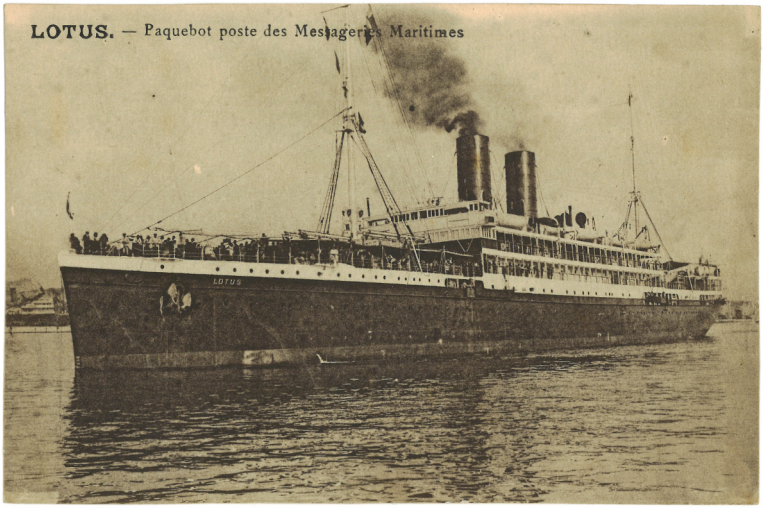
Le paquebot LOTUS
arrivant à Alexandrie
D'après R. Dumont Dupare, peintre du Ministère de la Marine


L35B002
CARTE POSTALE
Souvenir du
bateau de la classe
traversée de Port Said
à Marseille
Monsieur Moreau
16 Rue Buffon
Angers
(Maine-et-Loire)

Marseille 1922

Mr. Moreau
16 Rue Guffoy
Angers
Maine-et-Loire

A souvenir from the ship on which I travelled from Port Said to Marseille.



CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance

Adressé

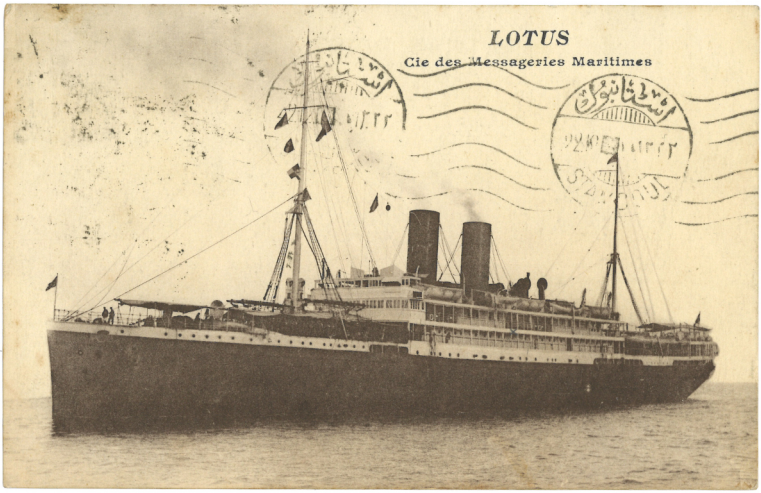
Il paraît que j'ai eu une chance particulière en ayant le Lotus en partage : les autres sont bien inférieurs. Et, de fait, la Filhouette est prometteuse. Le Capitaine Guirin, qui devait le commander est un ami de l'Oncle Emery ; la grève lui a fait prendre le commandement d'un autre bateau, mais je serai recommandé au Commissaire, ce qui a bien son prix.

Il paraît aussi que je pourrai aller d'Alexandrie au Caire, puis de là à Port-Saïd par le train. Le paquebot

Marseille October 1922

It seems that I was particularly lucky in getting to share my journey with the Lotus: other ships are far inferior to it. And, in fact, its silhouette is promising. Captain Guérin, who was supposed to command it, is a friend of Uncle Emery: the strike forced him to take command of another ship, but I will still be recommended to the purser, which has its own advantages.

It seems that I will be able to go from Alexandria to Cairo, and then from there to Port Saïd by train. The steamer, in fact, travels around Egypt: Alexandria, Port Saïd, then Jaffa and Beirut. I am counting on the sea being beautiful, otherwise I will find Alexandria a bit far away!!


LOTUS
Cie des Messageries Maritimes

CARTE POSTALE
Imprimerie, 95, rue de la République - Marseille
Nagyságos
özv. Fuchs Sámuelné
urasságának
Budapest.
II. Nyúl ucca 3.
Hongrie

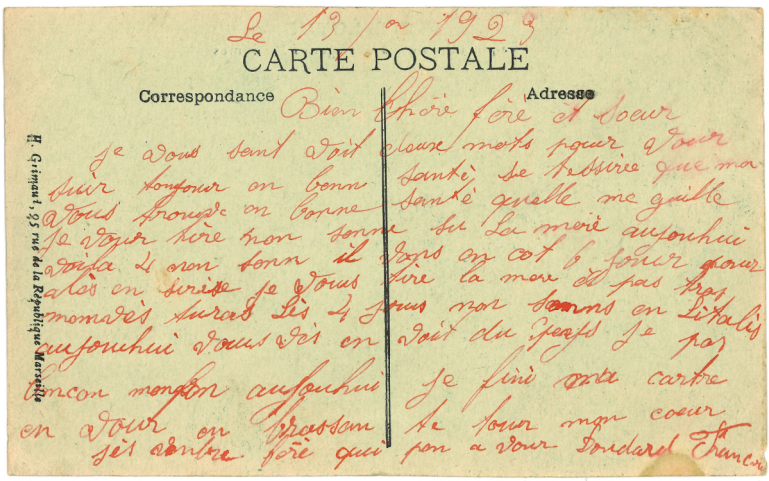
On the Lotus 20 December 1922

Ms. Janosch Fuchs
Nyúl u. 3
Budapest
Hungary

Dear Maria,

Along with the other part of the crate delivery, which is well stowed on the ship, I am travelling home and will arrive on the 25th or 26th. I am very sorry that I will not be home on Christmas Eve. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and all the best for the family.

Yours sincerely.


Le 13/01 1923

CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance

Bien chère père et sœur

Je vous sent doit deux mots pour vous dire toujour on bonne santé je espère que ma vous trouve en bonne santé quelle me guille je vojer père mon bonne ici La merie aujourhui voila 2 mois bonn il jors on est à jeun pour les en suite je vous dire la mer il pas bas monsieur aurez lès 4 jeus mon bonns en Sicile aujourhui vous dit en doit du jeurs je pas encon mongon aujourhui je finit onte carte en vous en grandeur je pour mon cœur jet contre père qui pon a vous Soudard Francis

H. Grimaut, 95 rue de la République Marseille

Adresse

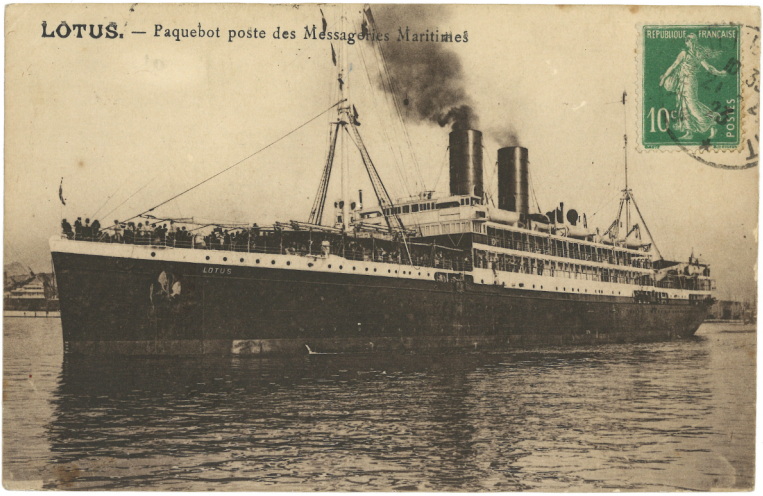
On the Lotus 13 January 1923

Dear Brother and Sister,

I am sending you a few words to let you know that I am still in good health and I hope this finds you in good health, as always. We have already been at sea for 4 days and it takes 6 days to get to Syria. The sea has not been very turbulent, especially these four days since we left Italy. Today, we finally saw some sun. I felt much less tired today. I am wrapping up my card and sending you my love with all my heart.

Your brother who thinks of you,

Dondard


LOTUS. — Paquebot poste des Messageries Maritimes
LOTUS
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
10c
POSTES

CARTE POSTALE
Correspondance
Adresse
Marseille 21 Juin 1925
C'est ce bateau qui
m'emportera ce soir.
Le départ aura lieu
à 16 heures.
A vous toutes mes
bonnes pensées
Mademoiselle
Odette Desgouttes
6 Rue des Halles
Vichy
Allier
Bourrelly, 22 rue de l'Etrier, Marseille

Marseille 21 February 1923

Miss Odette Desgouttes
6 Rue des Halles
Vichy
Allier

It is this ship that will carry me away tonight. The departure will take place at 4 p.m.

All my fondest thoughts to you all.

CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance

Chère Madame
Un petit mot, le départ s'avance ce soir à 6 heures nous serons sur ce bateau — il fait un soleil splendide la mer est calme
Bons Baisers
Nenette

Adresse

Mad...
Paris 8e

COLLECTION DE VILLERMONT

Beirut 17 March 1923

Paris, 8th arrondissement

Dear Madam, a brief note. My departure was brought forward. This evening at 4 PM we will be on the boat. The sun is shining; the sea is quiet.

Best wishes,

Nénette

POSTES
CARTE POSTALE
Correspondance
Adresse
Mademoiselle Siron
Institutrice à l'école
maternelle de Gigny
St Dizier PAQUEBOT
Hte Marne
France
26 MARS 23

On the Lotus 25 March 1923

Miss Liron
Teacher at the preschool of Gigny
St. Dizier, Haute-Marne, France

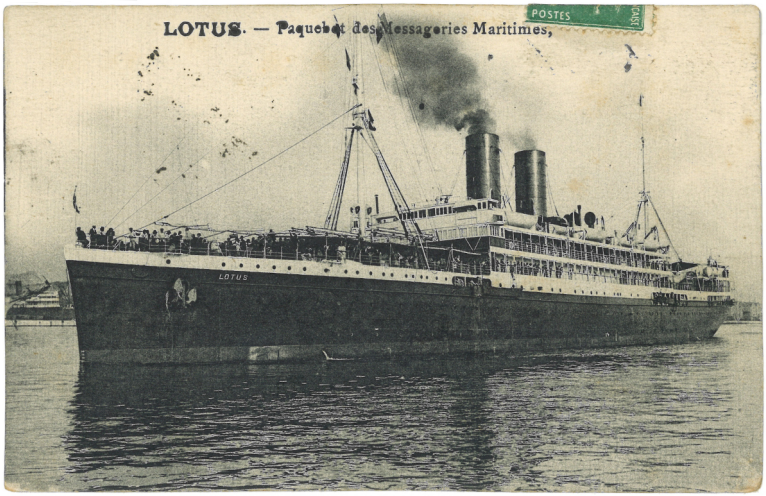
Dear Mademoiselle,

As I promised, I am sending you news from me and it is very good. I hope you are the same. We are in the middle of the Ionian Sea. The sea is calm. I was not ill at all. Tomorrow morning, we disembark in Alexandria.

Please accept my best wishes,

Pierre

Sender: Thierry Pierre. 21st Aviation Regiment. Army of the Levant. On board the Lotus.


LOTUS. — Paquebot des Messageries Maritimes,
POSTES
LOTUS

Ex. Thierry Pierre - 21e Regt. A.
des du Savant
à bord du Lotus -
CARTE POSTALE
PAQUEBOT
MARNE
Correspondance
Adresse
Mademoiselle Thierry
20 Rue François Ier
Ste Dizier
Hte Marne
France
ALEX. 26 MARS 23 EGY.
10 c
RÉPUBLIQUE FRA
A bord du Lotus le
25 - 3 - 1923 -
Ma petite amie
Je t'envoie ces quelques mots
pour te dire que je pense
à toi et que je t'aime
Mille baisers de votre
Pierre
Petite Sœur
Pierre

On the Lotus 25 March 1923

Mrs. Thierry
20 Rue François Ier
St. Dizier
Haute-Marne, France

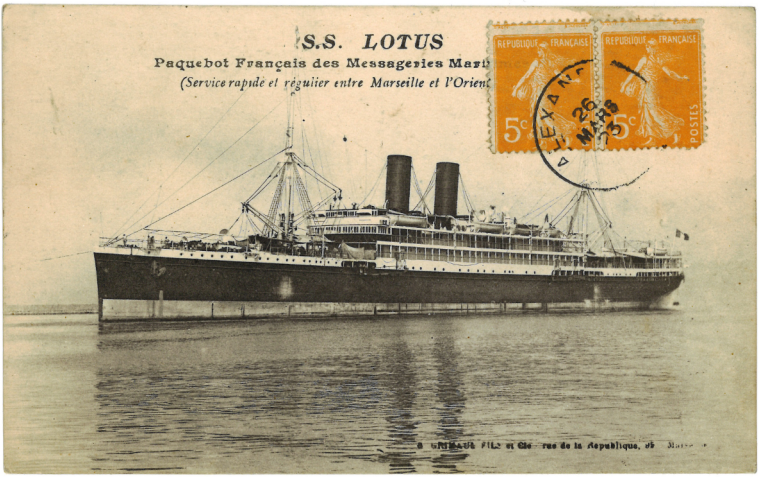
Darling little sisters,

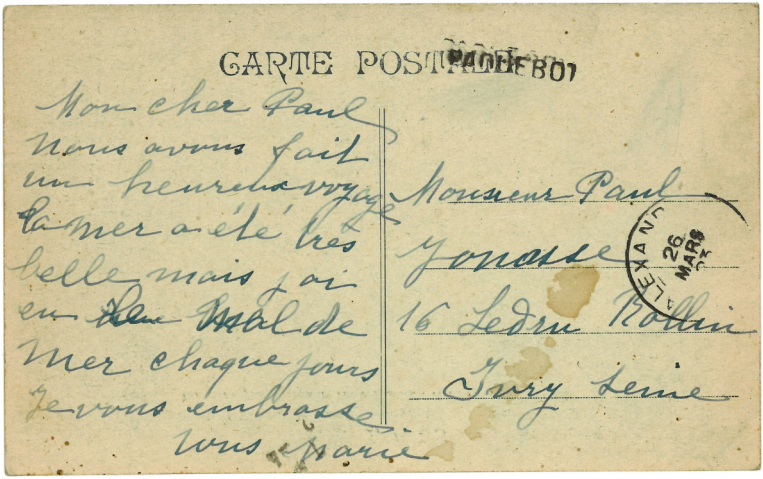
I am sending you a picture of the ship that is taking me far away. It is for you to keep as a souvenir. The sea is calm, the weather is nice. As I write to you, I see an oil tanker passing us by. The ship's commander came to provide an update - on board it is 12:10, while in France it is 10:45.

Lots of love from your little brother,

Pierre

Sender: Thierry Pierre - 21st Regiment A.
Army of the Levant
On the Lotus


S.S. LOTUS
Paquebot Français des Messageries Mari
(Service rapide et régulier entre Marseille et l'Orient
REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
5c
REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
5c
POSTES
ALEXANDRIE
26 MARS


CARTE POSTALE
Mon cher Paul
Nous avons fait
un heureux voyage
la mer a été très
belle mais j'ai
eu mal de
mer chaque jours
Je vous embrasse
tous
Marie
Monsieur Paul
Gonnesse
16 Ledru Rollin
Juvisy Seine
ALEXANDRIE
26 MARS

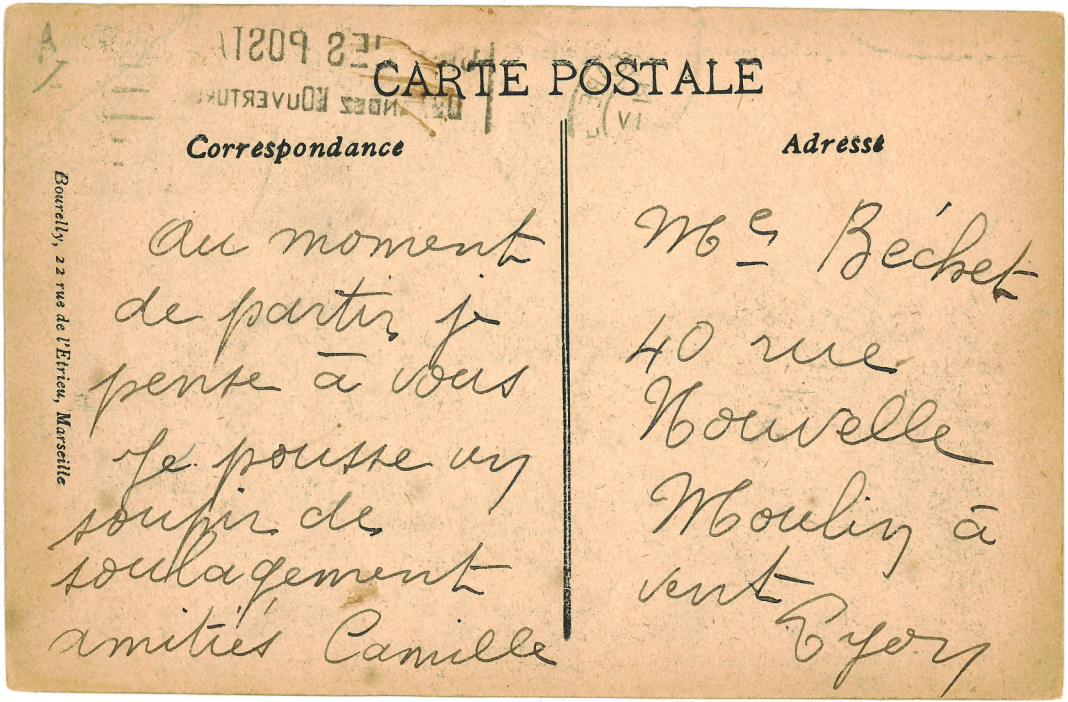
Alexandria 26 March 1923

Mr. Paul Jonasse
16 Ledru-Rollin
Ivry-sur-Seine

My dear Paul,

We had a pleasant journey. The sea was beautiful but I was seasick every day.

I send you all my love.



CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance

au moment de partir je pense à vous je pousse un soupir de soulagement amitiés Camille

Adresse

Mme Béchet
40 rue Nouvelle
Moulin à vent
Cyers

Bourelly, 22 rue de l'Etrier, Marseille

On the Lotus 18 April 1923

Mrs. Béchet
40 rue Nouvelle du Moulin-à-Vent
Eysines

As we depart, I am thinking about you. I breathe a sigh of relief.

Best wishes,

Camille

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

"LOTUS" — Fumoir des premières classes

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

CARTE POSTALE

Chère Hélène.

Je t'envoie une vue du paquebot sur lequel nous allons être. Nous devions embarquer aujourd'hui mais la date du départ étant retardée nous ne partirons d'ici que le 7.

Marseille est vraiment très intéressant à visiter on ne se croirait jamais aussi loin de Paris par le mouvement qui y règne et par la foule qui circule dans les rues.

Bons baisers pour toi et ta maman de nous deux Hélène

Marseille 1923

Dear Hélène,

I am sending you a picture of the vessel we will be boarding. We were meant to board today, but since the date of departure was delayed, we will only board on the 7th.

Marseille is truly very interesting to visit. One would never believe oneself so far from Paris considering the constant movement and the crowd that circulates in the streets.

Our love to you and your mother from both of us,

Hélène

↑ The Shah in Deauville on 14 August 1922. © Bibliothèque nationale de France.

On the Lotus 1 December 1923

The Shah of Persia has just left Beirut. The *Lotus* is carrying him to France. For his journey to our country, he insisted on travelling aboard a French vessel. Given the fierce struggle being waged against us in the East, it would be impossible not to regard His Majesty's choice as a significant gesture.

Last night, the charming ship, ablaze with lights, received the members of the French community who had come to greet the young sovereign. Now the hour of departure has arrived. General Weygand takes leave of the Shah and returns to his launch. The first shot of the one hundred and one gun salute resounds. I am standing beside the Shah, whom I am accompanying as far as Alexandria. The ship heads northward across a splendid calm sea. The peaks of Lebanon fade into the mist.

The Shah speaks to me of Paris, where he looks forward to spending six months. He mentions our politicians and our men of letters.

"I know Marcel Prévost and Robert de Flers personally," he says. "I read many books from your country, about one every day."

One of his chamberlains brings over an entire bundle. There is François Mauriac's *River of Fire*, which His Majesty has just begun, together with the latest works by my friend Pierre Bonardi, by Jean Balde, and by Isabelle Sandy.

Soon Tripoli of Syria comes into view. Above the green line of palms along the shore, I point out to the Shah the ochre patch formed by the castle of the Counts of Toulouse. It was there that Princess Mélisende lived. It was here, at the very spot where the *Lotus* has just dropped anchor, that the ship of Jaufré Rudel cast anchor eight centuries earlier, whatever Gaston Paris may have argued to the contrary.

Night has fallen. We retrace, in reverse, along the Phoenician coast, the beautiful route. On the poop deck I listen to the captain of the *Lotus* speak of the distinguished passengers who have graced his ship: Clemenceau, Baudrillart, Zaghloul Pasha...

To our left the lighthouses pass slowly by. First comes the twin red light of Sidon, then the lighthouse of Tyre, then Ras Naqoura, marking the frontier between Syria and Palestine.

In the darkness below us, amid the sound of water sliding along the ship's hull, a piano can be heard. It is the Shah of Persia playing.

Midnight. More lights appear: Acre, the Saint Jean d'Acre of Bonaparte and Sir Sidney Smith, which sailors jokingly call 'Saint Jeanne d'Arc.' Here dwell the last adherents of Babism, those mystics who assassinated Nasir al Din in 1896, the great-grandfather of the young king playing the piano below. They sought a natural refuge on the ancient land of the Old Man of the Mountain. Haifa has now become a stronghold of Zionism.

This Shah Nasir al Din possessed considerable wit. I remember the memoirs he wrote about his journey to France, and the reply he gave in Paris in 1876 to Monsieur de Rothschild, who was pleading the cause of Persia's Jews before him:

"I am told that you and your brother possess one thousand crores of wealth, more than five hundred million francs. It seems to me that the best thing you could do would be to purchase from some state, for fifty crores, a territory where you might gather together all the Jews of the world. You would govern them wisely, and thus they would no longer be scattered and without a homeland."

Along the dark land through which we are passing, the British are now putting into practice the old Nasir al Din's mischievous suggestion. Let us reserve judgement for a little while longer on the outcome of this experiment.

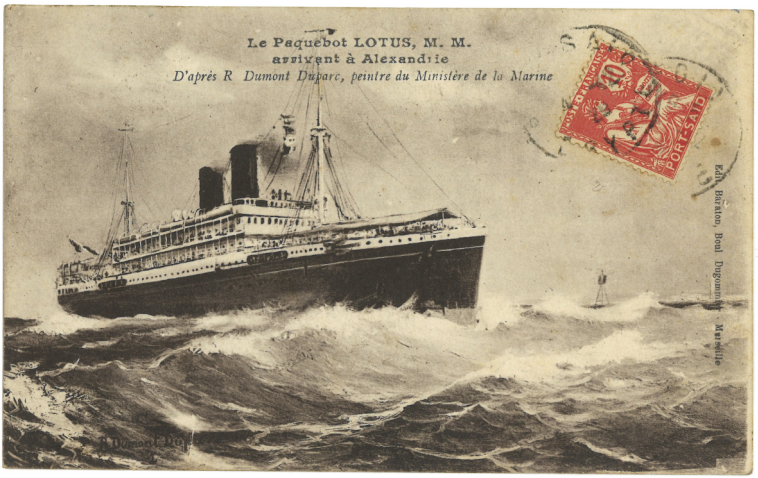
Le mont Karmel avec Caifa. Berg Karmel mit Haïfâ. Mount Carmel with Haifa.

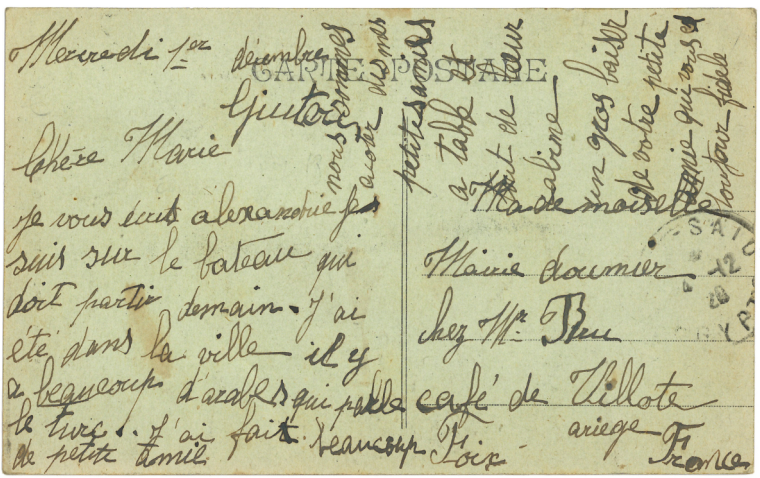
Jaffa! We fall prey to the British sanitary authorities. Here everyone must submit to inspection. The ship's doctor barely succeeds in obtaining an exemption for the Imperial Highnesses accompanying the Shah. He must personally guarantee that these princes are in perfect health.

I spend most of this day in conversation with His Excellency Heshmat es Saltaneh, Master of Ceremonies to His Majesty. No more accomplished scholar could be found than this high Persian dignitary, a Doctor of Law of the University of Paris. He speaks to me of the poets of contemporary Persia: Arif the pamphleteer, Djelal el Memalek, Malek ol Sho'ara, the Prince of Poets, and also of their illustrious predecessors, Ferdowsi, Hafez and Saadi.

The *Lotus* glides across the phosphorescent sea. The Shah and I pace the deck together…

Source: Pierre Benoît, *Œuvres diverses* (A. Michel 1970, Paris), 421-424




CARTE POSTALE

Mercredi 1er décembre

Chère Marie

je vous écris d'Alexandrie je suis sur le bateau qui doit partir demain. J'ai été dans la ville il y a beaucoup d'arabes qui parle le turc. J'ai fait beaucoup de petite amie nous sommes arrêté aussi petits garçons de taille de hauteur de Madame avec un gros bébé de votre petite fille qui vous est toujours fidèle

Mlle Marie Daumier
chez Mr Bru
café de Tillet
Ariège France

Alexandria 1 December 1923

Miss Marie Doumier
c/o Mr. Bru
Café de Villote
Foix, Ariège, France

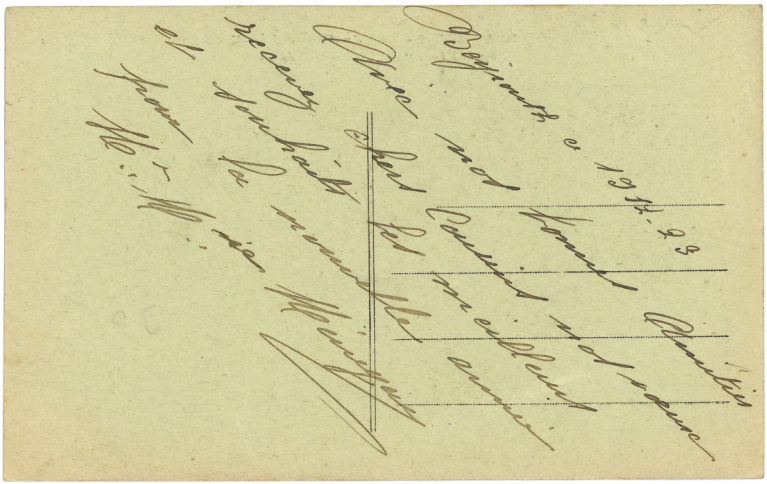
Dear Marie,

I am writing to you from Alexandria. I am on the boat that is supposed to leave tomorrow. I went into the city - there are many Arabs who speak Turkish.

I have made a lot of girlfriends. We sit next to them at the table and their cabin is right nearby.

Much love from your boyfriend who is always faithful.

BEYROUTH - Vue du Grand Sérail
Paquebot Poste "LOTUS" sortant du Port
Ménégoz 14.12.23



Beirut 19 December 1923

With our warmest regards, dear cousins and sister, please accept our best wishes for the new year.

Beyrouth le 13 Janvier 1924

Chère Maman

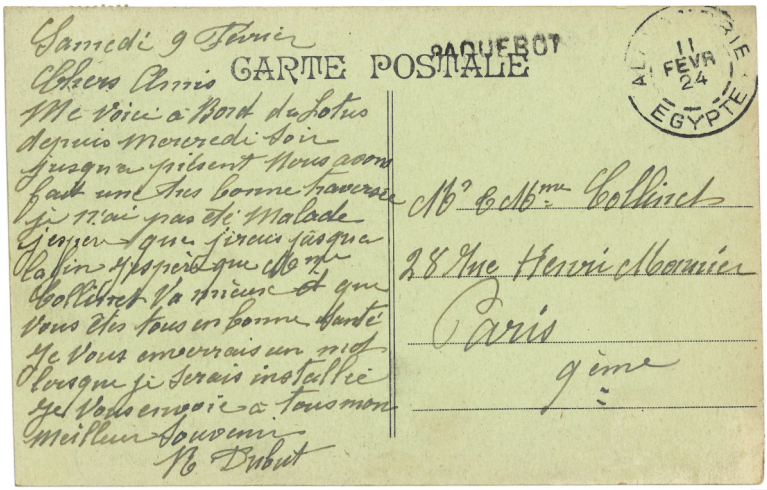
Aujourd'hui Dimanche il pleut
à torrent alors je suis resté à l'atelier
à passer mon temps à écrire à tout mon
courrier car tu sais il fait un temps à pas
tenir dehors. enfin que veux tu c'est la tempête
il fait même en commencé de l'orage et de la
pluie à torrent et accompagnée de grêle enfin tu
sais ça n'en fiche pas de faire chaud car il fait
de orage à tout casser et devenir sous peu Dieu qui tonne en tombera

Beirut 13 January 1924

Dear Mother,

Today, Sunday, it is raining heavily so I am staying in the workshop and spending my time writing all my letters because, you know, the weather is terrible outside. I mean, it is a bit of a storm, it is actually starting to thunder and rain heavily, with hail too. Anyway, you know, it does not stop us from having fun because it is just a storm after all, and it will pass.

[- - -], who loves you and sends you his love.



Samedi 9 Février

Chers Amis

Me voici à Bord du Lotus depuis Mercredi soir Jusqu'ici puisent Nous avons fait une Très bonne traversée Je n'ai pas été Malade Espérons que Nous aurons Ainsi jusqu'à la fin J'espère que Mr de Collinet va mieux et que Vous êtes tous en bonne Santé Je Vous embrasse un mot Lorsque je serais installée Je Vous enverai à tous mon Meilleur Souvenir

M Dubut

On the Lotus 9 February 1924

Mr. and Mrs. Collinet
28 Rue Henri Monnier
Paris, 9th arrondissement

Dear friends,

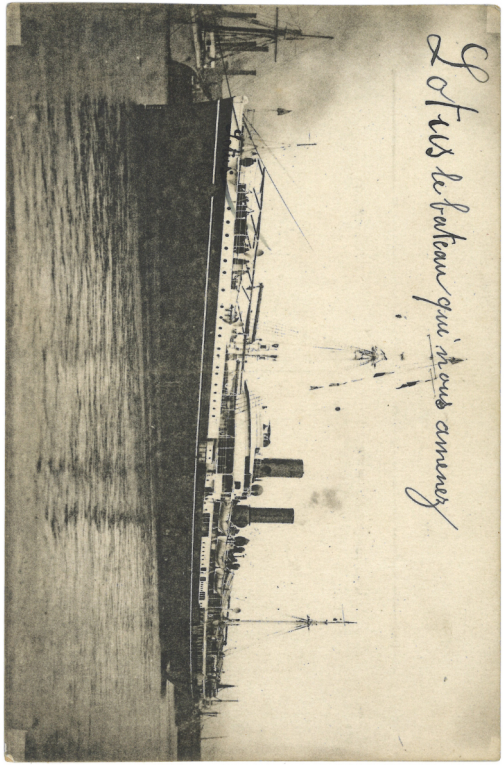
I have been aboard the Lotus since Wednesday evening. So far, we have had a very smooth crossing, and I have not been seasick. I hope I will make it all the way without trouble.

I hope Madame Collinet is feeling better and that you are all in good health.

I will send you a note once I am settled.

Sending you all my warmest regards,

M. Dubut



Beyrouth le 16 Mars 1914

Chères tante et Grand'Mère
je vous écris quelque lignes pour vous dire
que j'ai fait un voyage merveilleux
toujours le beau temps. Nous avons
passé par Alexandrie et Port-
Saïd. Egypte. nous sommes arrivés
le 14 ici il fait chaud l'on est bien
c'est un pays meilleur marché
quand France je crois que l'on
partira tandis ou Marseille vont
plus loin mais ça ne fait rien
vous pouvez mettre ici je crois
que nous le mandat de ce mois-ci bien
donc le bonjour a tous les parents
à bientôt de vos nouvelles
votre neveu Maurice J. Michel

8e E.T.E.M. 103e Compagnie Matricule 17875 F.M.
à Beyrouth Syrie. Secteur Postale 600
pas de timbre

Correspondance
Adresse

Beirut 16 March 1924

The ship that is bringing us.

Dear aunt and grandma,

I am writing a few lines to let you know that I had a wonderful journey, it was beautiful every day. We passed by Alexandria and Port Saïd, in Egypt. We arrived on the 14th. It is warm here and we feel well. It is a bit cheaper here than in France. I think we will be leaving on Monday or Tuesday to go farther, but it will not be a problem. You can still write to me here. I think everyone is in good shape. Say hello to all the parents for me. See you soon and send me news.

Your nephew,

Michel

8th E-T-E-M-103rd Company 17816 in Beirut, Syria. Postal Sector 600 to be forwarded. No stamp required.

Marseille le 2-4-24

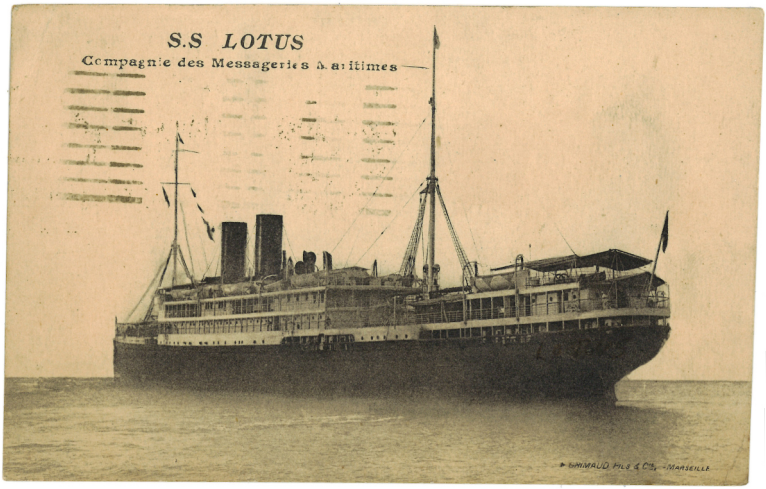
Bien chère mère et sœur
Nous avons parti de Strasbourg
par le train de 12,40. qui va à Nice
On est arrivé à Marseille à 6 heures du
matin. On s'est promener toute la
journée car on n'a pas voulu rentrer
car on ne peut plus sortir on
s'est rassemblé à 8 heures. La vie
n'est pas trop chère on mange très
bien dans les restaurants car ici on
n'a rien à manger. Une assiette de
cassoulet de nouf, il n'y a pas grand
chose. C'est très joli on a visité les
ports. Nous nous sommes sortis hier
soir. On a été au théatre.
Aujourd'hui ça va mieux qu'hier
car on a fait une bonne nuit malgré
que on a qu'une paillasse de paille
et nos couvertures. On est 60 dans le
même baraquement en briques.
C'est un tuile couverte. Nous un
grand camp qui est à 7 kl de Marseille
Le camp de la Martha. Hier on s'est
envolé à pied et on a fait plus de
40 kl dans notre journée et il a fallu
joliment. Mais aujourd'hui c'est un
soleil merveilleux ont va bientôt
on mange des oranges. Il y a un réquisitionné
de nous ici. Nous embarquons
mercredi sur le bateau. Vendredi il y
aura 1600 qui vont partir on nous

Carte Correspondance

IMP. LEVY FILS & CIE, PARIS

Camp St. Marthe 2 April 1924

Dear mother and sister,
We left Strasbourg on the 12.40 train for Nice. We arrived in Marseille at 6 in the morning. We walked around all day since we did not want to go back, as it would mean we could not go out again. We got to camp at 3. Here it is not too expensive and we eat well in restaurants since we have nothing to eat otherwise. There is a run-of-the-mill canteen, but there is almost nothing there. It is very nice, we visited the ports. We went out last night, we went to the theatre. Today is better than yesterday and we slept well, although we only have a straw mattress and our blankets. There are 60 of us in the same barrack, in bunks right next to each other. We are one of many teams in a big camp that is 7 hours from Marseille, Camp St. Marthe. Yesterday, we were sent to travel on foot, it was about 40 km and it rained a lot. But today there is wonderful sun, we are not cold and we ate oranges. There is a regiment of blacks here. We are boarding this ship on Wednesday. By Friday there will be 1,200 people who will leave with us.
Greetings from Paul.


S.S LOTUS
Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes
GIRAUD FILS & Cie - MARSEILLE

CARTE POSTALE
CHÈQUES POSTAUX
D'UN COMPTE COURANT
MARSEILLE-GARE
BCHES DU RHONE
17 30 VII
29
1924
a bord du Lotus
27 juillet 24
J'espère arriver
Vichy le 1 ou 2 août
pour faire une saison
comme en 1921. Je
compte trouver une place
dans votre hôtel. J'ai
déjà averti M. Vallé
Mes respects à toute la famille
à bientôt
Hôtel de la Comète
Vichy

On the Lotus 27 July 1924

Mrs. V. Allamargot
Hôtel de la Concorde
Vichy

I hope to reach Vichy on the 1st or 2nd of August, to spend my season like in 1921. I am counting on finding a place in your hotel. I have already notified Mr. Washe. My respects to the entire family.

See you soon.

la figure. pour les remettre. autrement on en viendrait jamais à bout. c'est comme quand ils nous vende quelque chose il qu'ils le font trop cher on le prends et on fraise en repassant. 5 la fois d'après ils y font bien attention. car ils n'y gagne pas beaucoup. La température n'est pas mauvaise pour le moment il n'y a que 30° dessous de zéro tu vous pouvez que ce n'est pas beaucoup surtout quand on est à l'ombre. Vous savez aussi que nous sommes en avance de trois heures sur la france c'est à dire que quand il est midi en france il est 9 heures à Boyarka. quand à l'argent ce n'est pas la peine de m'en envoyer car j'en ai assez pour 20 francs françois tu as 100 piastres roumaine. le franc ne vaut pas mais seulement. tu ne peut rien acheter à moin de 5 piastre c'est à dire 20 sous. car une piastre vaut 4 sous. et on ne vend rien à moin de 5 piastres. nous gagnons 55 par quinzaine. ce 225 piastres alors tu vois que je n'en ai pas besoin pour le moment. et si nous montons en colonne nous touchons 6 f. par jr

9049027
CARNET POSTAL

… the sum to return, otherwise we will never see the end of it. It is like when someone sells you something and the price they give you is too high, but we pay it. The next time we go back, they give us a lot of attention because they do not earn a lot otherwise. The temperature at the moment is not bad, it is only 5 above zero. You will see when you come that it is not warm, especially when we are in the shade. You also know that we are three hours ahead of France, which means that when it is midday in France, it is three o'clock in Beirut. With regards to money, it is not worth sending me money because I have enough. For 20 French francs you get 100 Syrian pounds. The franc never loses, it is only that we cannot buy anything under 5 pounds, that is 20 pennies, since one pound is worth 4 pennies. And they sell nothing under 5 pounds. We earn 55 per fortnight, or 225 pounds. So, you can see, I do not need money for the moment. And if we advance up the ranks, we earn 6 francs per day.

NUMBER OF WOMEN WHO ATTEMPTED TO LAND CLANDESTINELY AT ALEXANDRIA FROM THE MESSAGERIES MARITIMES BOATS, 1927 & 1928.

Date	6 - 2 - 27
Name	MILASE Madeleine
Ship	"Lotus"
Nationality	French
How discovered	Arrested whilst trying to land in the uniform of a French soldier.
Action taken	Replaced on board, detained, and left by same ship.

Date	20 - 6 - 27
Name	Le GRAND Suzanne
Ship	"Mariette Pacha"
Nationality	French
How discovered	Reported by the Chief Officer. Was dressed in blue overalls such as are worn by members of the crew.
Action taken	Handed over to the French Consul at his request.

Date	20 - 6 - 27
Name	LAVERSON Madeleine
Ship	"Mariette Pacha"
Nationality	French
How discovered	In the same way as No. 2.
Action taken	Handed over to the French Consul at his request.

Date	5 - 2 - 28
Name	GRABB Germaine
Ship	"Lotus"
Nationality	French
How discovered	Was in possession of a 3rd class ticket for Beyrouth. Arrested whilst trying to land dressed in a man's clothing, accompanied by two gentlmen passengers, Orlandi Manuel (French Army unit) and Alex. Borelli, an architect.
Action taken	Replaced on board, detained under guard, and sailed by the same steamer.

↑ Overview of 'clandestine landings' of women on Messageries Maritimes boats in Alexandria (1/2). © LSE: Women's Library, 4IBS/6/034.

On the Lotus 22 August 1924

In a letter, dated 30 July 1925, the Cairo Branch of the International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children sent to the Consul General of France in Cairo the following account of how Nelly Plumier was trafficked aboard the Lotus*:*

"In Marseille, Nelly lived on Rue de Besançon, at the home of Mrs. Legris. In late July 1924, Antoine Desanti brought her to his mother's house, a brothel, where she stayed for a month. His mother ran a café called 'Au Rendez-vous des Pêcheurs' in the old town.

On August 22, Antoine came to fetch Nelly, accompanied by three women, including a certain Jules, a ship's steward aboard the *Lotus* of the Messageries Maritimes. Another steward, whose name she does not know, acted as lookout during the boarding. Hidden in a crate above the propeller near the wine hold, she remained there throughout the crossing, even while in the port of Alexandria. At the moment of the *Lotus's* departure for Beirut, someone who had made the crossing aboard the *Lotus* gave her a landing pass as a 'visitor.'

In Alexandria, Nelly was taken to 35 Rue Anastase, a clandestine house run by an Italian woman.

Date	29 - 9 - 28
Name	DODANE Marie Anne
Ship	"Lotus"
Nationality	French
How discovered	Arrested whilst attempting to land with a Pass issued by the Company at Alexandria
Action taken	Handed over to the Purser of s/s "Lotus"; placed under guard, and sailed by the same vessel.

1929 to date.

Date	7 + 4 - 29
Name	RABINOVITCH Tauba Nechama
Ship	"Mariette Pasha"
Nationality	Pole
How discovered	Arrested whilst trying to land dressed in French Army uniform, accompanied by two French N.C.O.s, LAUBAN Charles and FLAMONT Emile.
Age	21
Action taken	Placed on board and left by the same steamer on 9 - 4 - 29

Date	1 - 6 - 29
Name	IMPERATRICE Angèle Thérèse
Nationality	French
Ship	"Grand Liban"
Age	45
How discovered	Arrested whilst attempting to land together with Mrs. Fortuna M ichela, Italian subject, washer-woman, who obtained passes from the local agent on the day of vessel's departure.
Action taken	Handed over to the French Consulate, where she was tried and sentenced to 45 days' imprisonment and left on 25 - 6 - 29 to Marseilles per s/s "Patria".

↑ Overview of 'clandestine landings' of women on Messageries Maritimes boats in Alexandria (2/2). © LSE: Women's Library, 4IBS/6/034.

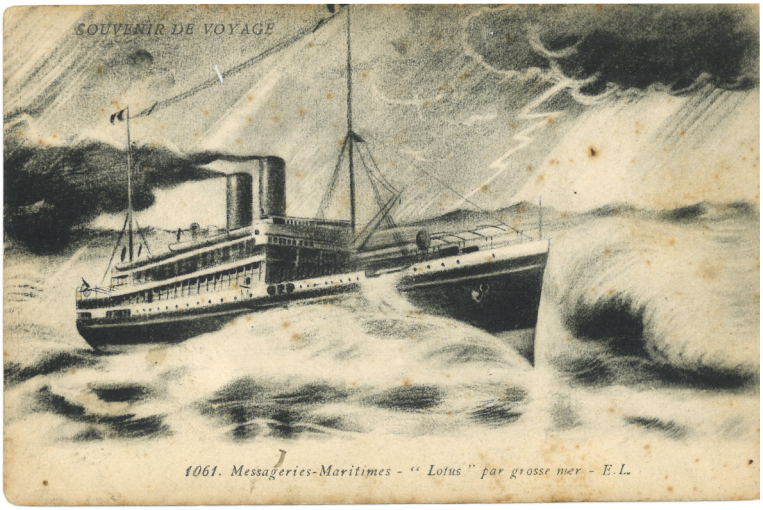
Refusing to submit to the demanded 'work,' she was subjected to mistreatment.

Having learned the day the *Lotus* returned from Beirut, Nelly paid 10 piasters to board the ship, where she asked to speak with the captain. Jules recognised her and informed Antoine, who had her removed from the ship, after which she received a brutal beating that kept her bedridden for more than a week. Thereafter, Nelly was transferred to Cairo to the house of Madame Mireille, a Frenchwoman, at No. 2 Rue Mahdi. Mireille was a prostitute and kept a clandestine house. Nelly and the other women 'worked' for Antoine and were always without money. During this period, Antoine took her back for three days in April 1925 and wounded her with a knife.

Although he had stolen her trunk and its contents, and although the unfortunate woman was left with nothing, Antoine then tried to extort 100 Egyptian pounds from her, claiming that it was to reimburse him for the expenses and advances he had made on her behalf.

It was then that Nelly placed herself under the protection of the French Consulate in Cairo."

Source: LSE: Women's Library, 4IBS/6/034


SOUVENIR DE VOYAGE
1061. Messageries-Maritimes - " Lotus " par grosse mer - E.L.

CARTE POSTALE
Correspondance
Adresse

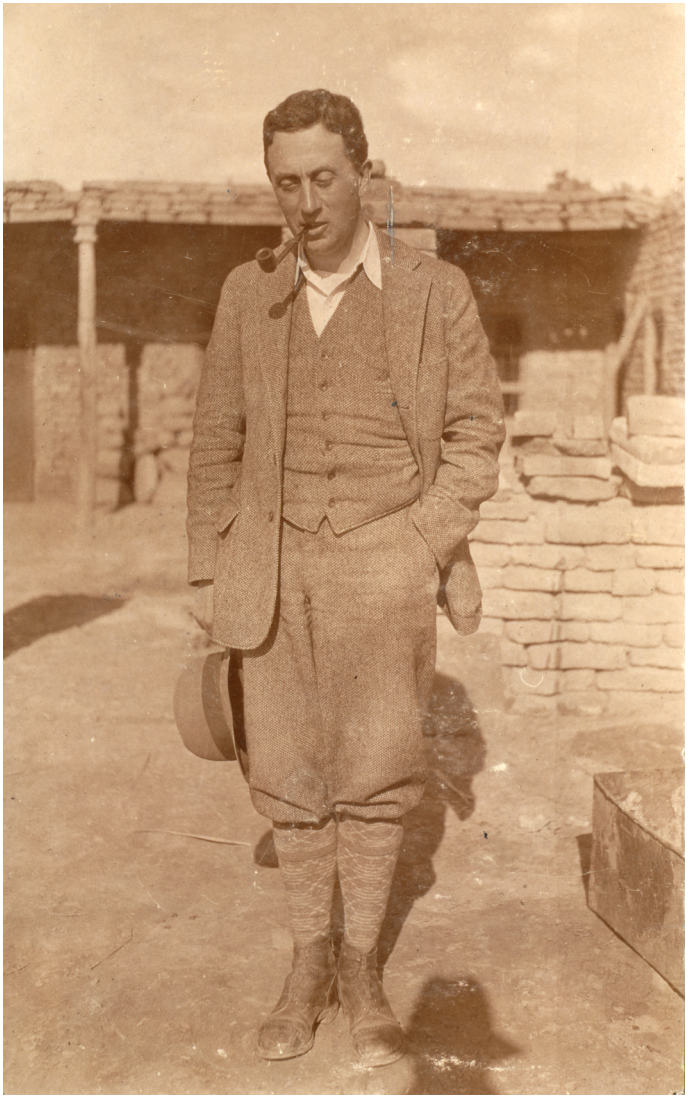
Beirut 25 August 1924

Dear parents,

We arrived this morning, not too early. I am beginning to feel fed up with everything. The sea was good to us throughout the entire journey and the ship worked well. Our journey lasted five days. For the moment, I still do not have an exact address, but I will probably send you one tomorrow. The heat here is different from Marseille. On the boat, we were well fed and we were accommodated in second class cabins. The blacks were in the cargo hold. There are some 1,200 of them. I do not think we will be moving in column just yet.

My greetings to everyone,

Alfred



↑ Leon Legrain at Ur (ca. 1925). Courtesy of the Penn Museum, image 9184.

On the Lotus 1 October 1924

As I leave Marseille on the SS. *Lotus* on October 1, 1924, a sharp north wind, which they call 'lou mistral', puts white crests on the blue waves. The parting view along the bay is lovely: Notre Dame de la Garde, the green pines of the Prado and Corniche, the grey rocky islands, If, Pomegue and Ratoneau. The passengers are a fine mixture of Egyptians, Jews, Levantines, three French officers and their wives, and a few lost British subjects. A crescent silver moon hangs over the dark blue sea.

The air is warmer near Corsica. How lonely seem the small villages in their green dales. Cretans, Phoenicians, Greeks settled here centuries ago. How many oriental types are on board: dark massy hair, curved noses, long eyelids, prominent cheekbones, round cheeks and fat necks, gazelle eyes glossy and disquieting, thin or full of sensuous lips for love and lie. Many a silk scarf of bright color is tied about the dark hair like the ancient 'Syriaca coppa'.

There are distant lightnings over the Italian Coast, and the air is stifling in the straits of Messina but the stars have never been so bright over our heads. I break the ice and talk across the table to the dark French lady with the gold spider jewel from

Madagascar. She is in business in Alexandria but she hails from Coutance in Normandy. There seems to be a colony of Normans - and many pilots - in Alexandria, Port Said and along the canal, and also in Algeria. The restless rovers who took Normandy, England and Sicily feel at home on the high seas. The lady's husband escaped a shipwreck, but spent seven hours in the water, after his boat had been torpedoed during the war. Beyrout then was a base for German submarines. Many supposed neutrals used wireless in their favor and laid mines in the canal. Why they never blocked it is still a wonder. Alexandria was visited by enemy planes. Egyptians were at first friendly toward Germany.

Alexandria has a very flat shore and a poor line of white buildings about the harbour. The landing affords the first contact with the oriental life, color, smell and dirt. Long shirts and red tarbouches crowd the 'suqs' or markets of meat, fish, eggs and vegetables. An oily, greasy smell permeates the whole atmosphere. Past Mehemet-Ali place and Twefik Pasha street, the quays and walks along the northern shore are a great improvement. They are decorated with green Egyptian flags bearing a white crescent and three stars; there are lines of electric lights, two triumphal arches and one large tent carpeted and hung with glass lustres in the best oriental taste. Tomorrow is the anniversary of

King Fuad's coronation. I hear some Missionaries pray: thank God for the British rule. The day they leave the place, we leave it too.

A large immigration of Greeks and Armenians has increased the population and doubled the rents. Rules and restrictions have been passed. But the country does not suffer, for it is rich and has plenty of gold. King Fuad and his suite drive briskly past me on their way to the palace of Ras ed Din. He is well spoken of as peaceful, intelligent and interested in education. Light dust rises like puffed incense under each step as I walk back to the ship. A Greek boat with a diver is fishing waste coal at the bottom of the harbour just alongside our liner. These scavengers reclaim over a ton a day.

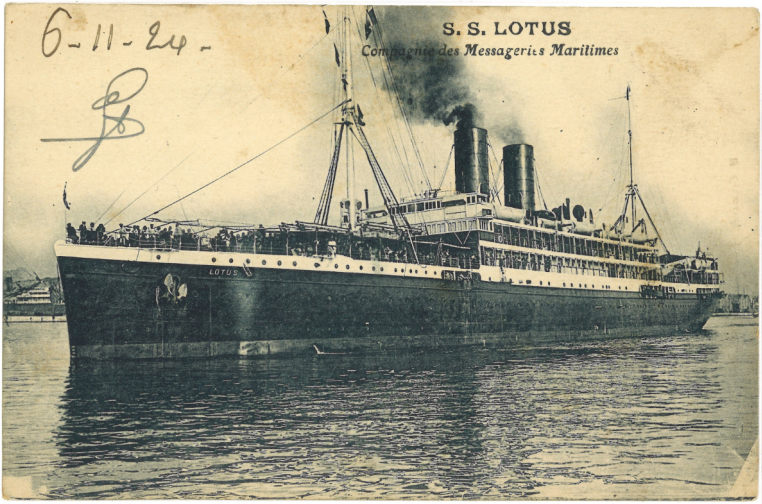
Port Said at the entrance of the canal stretches in a glaring sun, a long front of houses. Most of them are built with porches in the Eastern style. Over ten thousand passengers leave in May and June every year in quest of the northern breezes of the Lebanon mountains and come back in October. The Syrian Mandate under French control is divided into four states, two on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean and two inland, Damascus and Aleppo. The Pashas and local lords have lost a good deal of their absolute power and oppressive taxes. The great problem is the capture and distribution of water to irrigate the land and supply

↑ Postcards featuring views over Port Said and Beirut. From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

large cities. Tapping the main pipe for private use is a common form of abuse.

In Beyrout hotels have sprung up and the prices are real Syrian. The Paris décolleté mode prevails. Many automobiles are offered for sale. Fords are in great demand. The village grandees like to parade a car before their admiring peasants. Even before reaching the Syrian capital all kinds of rumours are floating over the blue waves as I pass along the white coast of Palestine and the famous cities, Jaffa, Haifa, Tyre, Sidon.

Source: Leon Legrain, 'The Joint Expedition to Ur of the Chaldees' (1925) 16 The Museum Journal 81, 81-84.



A

CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance

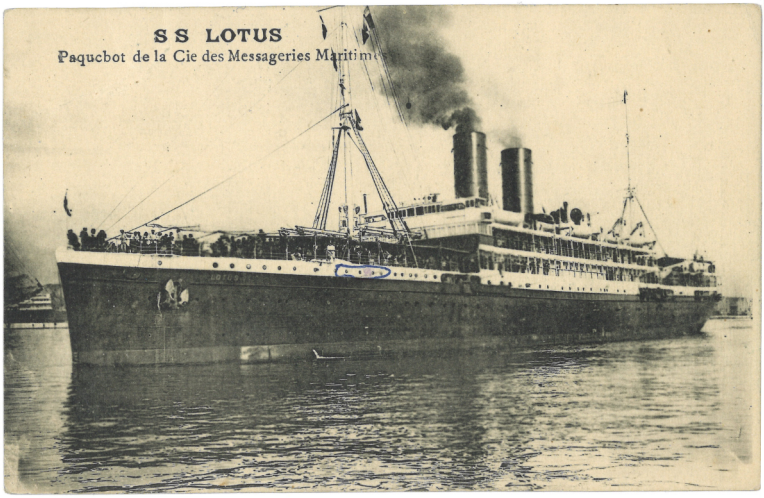
Adresse

Reconnais-tu ce navire?
C'est mon dernier embarquement
à 2 "ficelles" (2 galons)
Je suis satisfait de m'y
retrouver comme pilotin.

H. Grimaud, 95 rue de la République Marseille

On the Lotus 6 November 1924

Do you recognise this vessel? It is my latest journey on a 2 'string' (2 galleys). I am happy to be on board as one of its passengers.



CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance

19 avril 1915

A bord du Lotus.
entre Malte et le Pirée.

Je viens ma
Chère maman
de bon cœur
du voir votre beau cadeau
voyage splendide, tendre merveilleux
mon cabine. Je pense bien à toi
Je te
Gaeur

Adresse

Madame ve
Guillaume
à Vougeot
Cher
France

GRIMAUD MARSEILLE

On the Lotus 19 April 1925

Mrs. Guillaume
Vouzeron, France

Aboard the Lotus, between Malta and Piraeus. I am sending you, my dear mother, a warm embrace. You can see here our beautiful ship. Splendid journey, the weather was wonderful and the sea calm.

I am thinking of you,

Louise

CARTE POSTALE

Marseille
18 mai

CORRESPONDANCE

Cher Charles.

La nostalgie de Marseille m'a pris... & nous voilà au bord de la grande bleue... en rupture de banc, puisque la famille, que notre fugue. Il fait un soleil splendide... Qu'il ferait bon "partir"... tendrement

Etienne Jeanne

ADRESSE

M. Ch. Sillier

13. Rue de la Loire

St Etienne

(Loire)

Marseille 18 May 1925

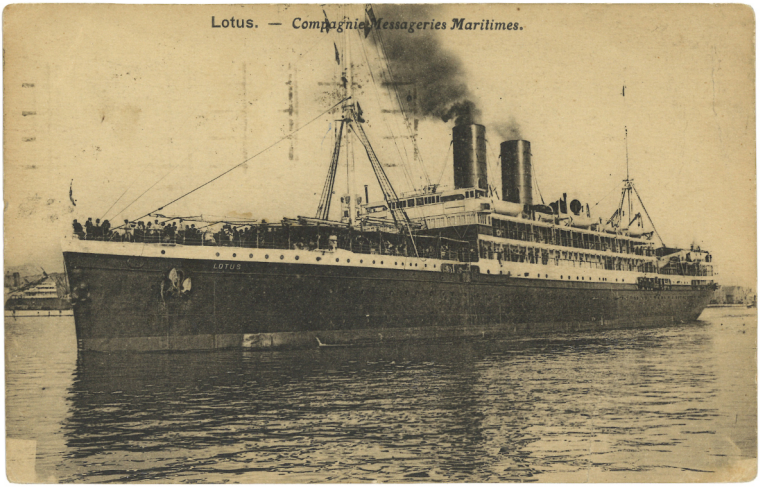
Mr. Ch. Gillier
13 Rue de la Loire
Saint-Étienne (Loire)

Dear Charles,

I was seized with nostalgia of Marseille. We are right by the Mediterranean, eloping since the family is unaware of our escape.

The sun is splendid… how good it feels to 'leave'.

Best wishes.


Lotus. — Compagnie Messageries Maritimes.
LOTUS

CARTE POSTALE
Correspondance
MARSEILLE-GARE
BOUCHES DU RHONE
11 30
12 · XI
25
MARSEILLE
PORTE DE L'ORIENT
SA MER, SON SOLEIL
SON CIEL BLEU
REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
POSTES
20c
Adresse
Madame
chez Madame
Louis Le Rodnier
à Changey
par Dijon
(Côte d'Or)

Marseille 12 November 1925

Mrs. Lambin
c/o Mrs. Louis Le Crosnier
Changey, Daix via Dijon
Côte-d'Or

My dear mother,

I am leaving for Aix soon to see my friends. Tomorrow, I will have lunch with the Grévins. On Saturday and Sunday, I will stay in Marseille and walk around. I went to Notre Dame de la Garde. It was freezing cold, even more so than in Vannes. On Monday, I will have lunch aboard the Lotus with the Captain who is very nice. It is a wonderful ship which holds more than 700 passengers on board. You will be able to see it from the card. On Monday I will spend the night in Toulon and on Tuesday or Wednesday evening will be en route to Dijon. I am having a very nice trip. The Lotus sets out again on the 16th at 13:30 for Egypt. I will attend its departure. You can see it too if you want to come back with me.

My regards to everyone.

Sur le Lotus le 18 Décembre 25

Chers Parents
et Chère Gabrielle

En vue d'Alexandrie la traversée n'a pas été trop mauvaise, j'ai été malade deux jours, mais ça va mieux. Dimanche prochain nous pourrons sortir à Alexandrie, faisons escale nous avons passé dans le détroit de Messine, un très beau paysage. La chaleur commence à devenir accablante pendant le jour, et la nuit avec une couverture l'on en a assez. En ce qui a trait à la partie de vue, la nourriture n'est pas trop mauvaise, nous sommes environ 200 Hommes de différentes troupes avec celle que je suis, Zouaves de Constantine, Spahis, Légion Etrangère, Tirailleurs Algériens, Artillerie, Génie, Train des Equipages, Infirmiers, Ouvriers d'Art, Sections d'Infirmières, Médecins, Officiers, Sous-Officiers, Caporaux, Soldats, Civils, Femmes, Enfants, Vieillards, Malades, Blessés, Convalescents, Valides, Invalides, Morts, Vivants, Ressuscités, Damnés, Elus, Anges, Démons, Saints, Pécheurs, Justes, Impies, Croyants, Athées, Agnostiques, Libres Penseurs, Francs-Maçons, Jésuites, Dominicains, Franciscains, Bénédictins, Trappistes, Chartreux, Carmes, Augustins, Capucins, Oratoriens, Rédemptoristes, Assomptionnistes, Salésiens, Lazaristes, Eudistes, Sulpiciens, Missionnaires, Prêtres, Diacres, Sous-Diacres, Acolytes, Exorcistes, Lecteurs, Portiers, Evêques, Archevêques, Cardinaux, Patriarches, Primats, Papes, Antipapes, Schismatiques, Hérétiques, Excommuniés, Interdits, Suspens, Réguliers, Séculiers, Moines, Nonnes, Abbés, Abbesses, Prieurs, Prieures, Supérieurs, Supérieures, Généraux, Généraux, Généraux

On the Lotus 18 December 1925

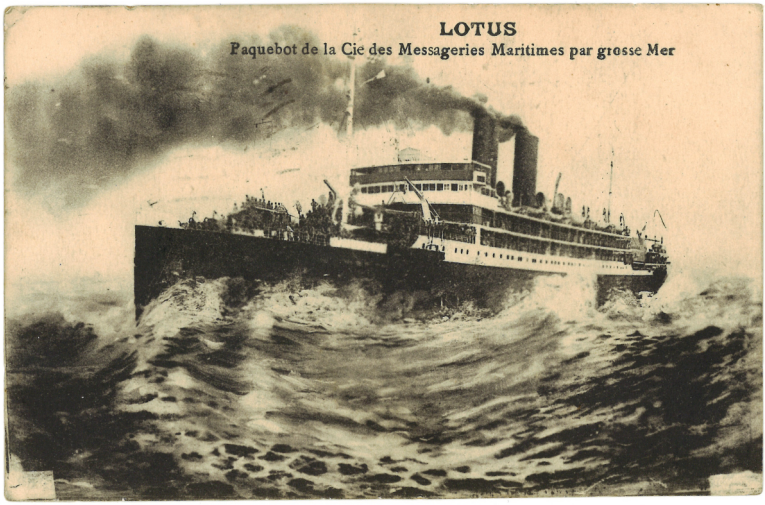
Dear friends and dear Gabrielle,

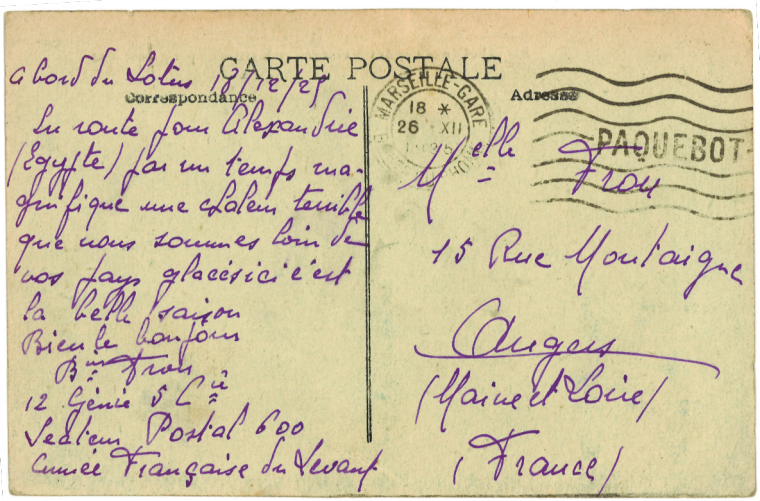
I am within sight of Alexandria, the crossing was not too bad. I was ill for two days but I am getting better. On Sunday, we may visit Alexandria. On the way, we made a stop in the Strait of Messina, a beautiful landscape. The heat has started to become overwhelming during the day, and at night, in our cabins, one blanket is enough. And there is nothing but water, as far as the eye can see. The food is not too bad, we are around 400 men from different troops. I am living with the troop from Metz who I left Verdun with. I am sorry but the ship just started to swing around. We will arrive in Beirut on Wednesday and I still do not have an address.

The courier leaves every week and another one comes back every week so you should hear from me every 8 days.

Best wishes,

Albert


LOTUS
Paquebot de la Cie des Messageries Maritimes par grosse Mer


CARTE POSTALE
Correspondance
Adresse
MARSEILLE-GARE
18 * 26 XII
PAQUEBOT
A bord du Lotus, 19/12/27
En route pour Alexandrie
(Egypte) par un temps ma-
gnifique une chaleur terrible
que nous sommes loin de
vos jours glacés ici c'est
la belle saison
Bien le bonjour
B. Fron
12 Génie 6e C.a
Vedieu Postal 600
Armée Française du Levant
Mlle
Fron
15 Rue Montaigne
Angers
(Maine et Loire)
(France)

On the Lotus 18 December 1925

Miss Fron
15 Rue Montaigne
Angers
Maine-et-Loire (France)

En route to Alexandria (Egypt).

The weather is magnificent, the heat terrible, we are a long way from your icy lands, here it is the warm season.

Best wishes.

Brigadier Fron, 12th Corps of Engineers, 5th Company, Postal Sector 600, French Army of the Levant.

Beyrouth le 10-1-26

Chers cousins et cousines

je vous fait cette petite carte pour vous donner de mes nouvelles qui sont toujours bonne pour le moment et j'espère que ma carte vous trouveras tous les trois de même je vous envoie le bateau qui ma amenner je vous vous dire que j'ai fait un très bon voyage la mer a été toujours calme aussi je ne me suis pas trop ennuyé por faisant le voyage, pour le moment je suis très bien je suis au parc d'artillerie. Tu embrasseras bien la petite suzanne pour moi je termine en vous embrassant de tous cœur votre cousin qui pense toujours à vous. Marcel. 15me G. a. c. à parc Bailon. Marcel au 15me artillerie S. p. 600, syrie

CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance

Adresse

Beirut 10 January 1926

Dear cousins,

I am sending you this short letter to give you news from me. The news is still good for the moment and I hope that my letter will find all three of you in the same state. I am sending you the ship that I travelled with. I wanted to tell you that I had a very good journey, the sea was always calm and I did not get very sick as we travelled. At the moment, I am feeling very well, I am at the artillery park. Kiss little Suzanne for me.

I conclude by sending you all my love, your cousin who is always thinking of you.

Marcel

Boilon Marcel at the 19th Army Group Center, Artillery Park. Postal Sector 600

vœux de fête affectueux
et sincères avec mes prières
et la vive tendresse
de celle qui veut
toujours rester votre petite Maman.
Comment allez-vous ? A deux
reprises, j'ai eu la grippe
avec de gros accès de fièvre
qui m'ont obligée à garder
le lit quelques jours.
Demandez au Bon Maître de
nous garder force et courage
jusqu'au bout, sans quoi,
au milieu de ces turcs, avec
les angoisses et les émotions qui
nous procurent, nous serons,
bientôt de l'anémie cérébrale.
Aujourd'hui par exemple, les
policiers turcs, sans raison et sans
nous prévenir sont venus faire

Imp. F. Champenois. Tisé Paris. N° 3011.

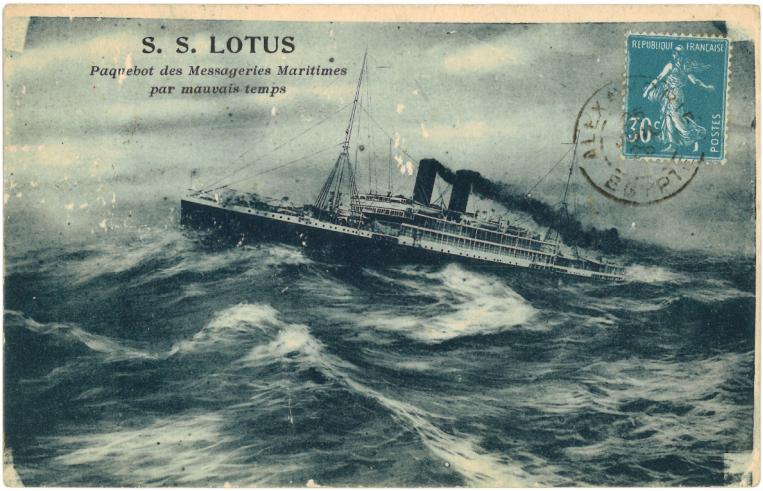
MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

CARTE POSTALE
Correspondance
Toujours réservé aux voyageurs (Se renseigner à la poste)
Correspondance
Adresse

On the Lotus April 1926

How are you? On two occasions I had the flu with bouts of fever that forced me to stay in bed for several days. Please ask the Good Lord to keep us strong and courageous until the end, otherwise amongst these Turks, with the anxieties and emotions they bring us, we will soon have cerebral anaemia. Today, for example, the Turkish policemen, without reason or warning, conducted a raid. I do not know why.

My sincere and affectionate wishes, along with my prayers and the deepest affection from the one who always wants to remain your little Marie.

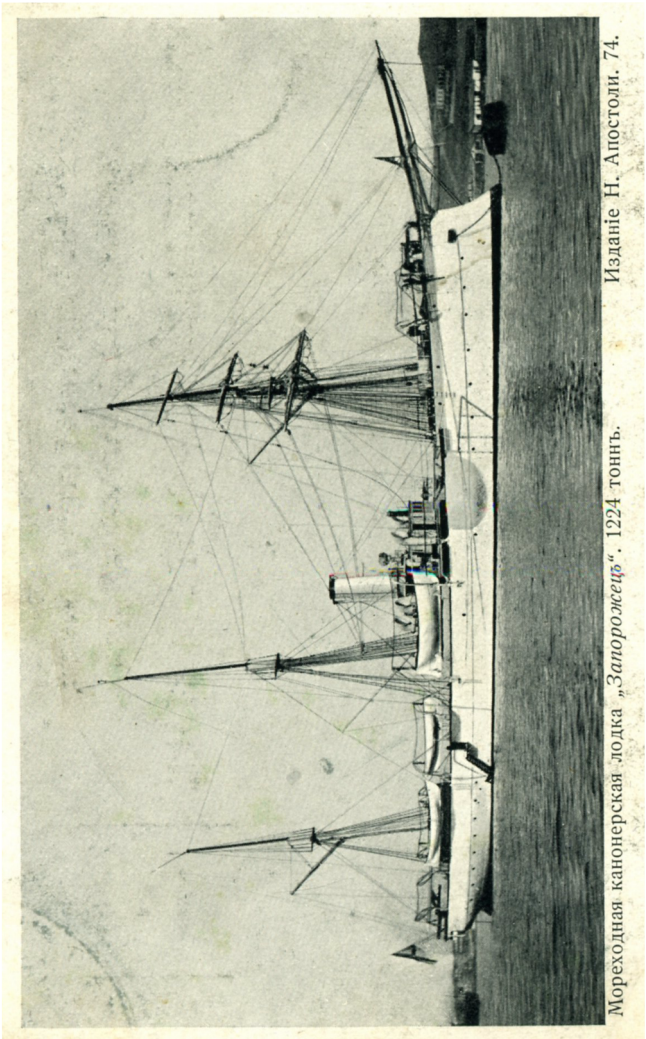

S. S. LOTUS
Paquebot des Messageries Maritimes
par mauvais temps
REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
30c
POSTES
ALEXANDRIE
EGYPTE

CARTE POSTALE
Correspondance
Adresse
ALEXANDRIE
28
JUIL
26
EGYPTE
ORIMAUD MARSEILLE
Mademoiselle
Delahaye
8 rue Calmar
Nantes
PAQUEBOT

On the Lotus 24 July 1926

Miss Delahaye
8 rue Talensac
Nantes

Big hugs and kisses from Louisette.



↑ The *Boz-Kourt* was built in 1887 as the *Saporoschez* (pictured here ca. 1903). From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

On the Boz-Kourt 2 August 1926

In the evening of 2 August 1926, the *Lotus* collided with the *Boz-Kourt*.

The *Boz-Kourt* was a steamship built in 1887 as the *Saporoschez* for the Imperial Russian Navy. Constructed at the naval shipyard in Mykolaiv (then Nikolayev), it entered service in 1888 as a seagoing gunboat in the Black Sea Fleet. The vessel was 67.2 metres long, 12.2 metres wide, and had a displacement of approximately 1,280 tonnes. The *Lotus*, by comparison, was considerably larger (142 metres in length, 15.5 metres in width, and approximately 10,500 tonnes displacement).

During its naval service, the *Boz-Kourt* was employed on station and diplomatic duties in the Black Sea and Mediterranean. In 1891, the ship participated in a scientific expedition that investigated the presence of hydrogen sulphide in the deep waters of the Black Sea.

In November 1896, the vessel transported Russian naval officers to visit the Sultan of Raheita, a small coastal sultanate in what is now Eritrea. At a time when Italy, Ethiopia, France, and Russia were competing for influence in the Horn of Africa, the landing of Russian personnel at Raheita

heightened Italian concerns about a possible Russian foothold on the Red Sea coast and contributed to tensions that became known as the Raheita incident

After being decommissioned in 1911, the vessel was converted into a civilian steamship and renamed *St. Nikolai*. During the Russian Civil War it was used in the evacuation of White Russian troops and civilian refugees from Crimea in 1920. Interned in Tunisia with much of the White Fleet, it subsequently sailed under the Maltese flag as *Richdale* before being sold to a Turkish shipping company in 1924 and renamed *Boz-Kourt*. As a consequence of the ship's collision with the *Lotus*, the *Boz-Kourt* sank on 2 August 1926.

The following passages are excerpts of the witness statements provided by crew members of the *Boz-Kourt* in connection with the Turkish proceedings against the officers in charge on both ships.

Statement 1: Hasan Bey, captain of the *Boz-Kourt*:

"When we were approximately three to four miles from the Sığrı Lighthouse, I observed a light about seven to eight miles away off the starboard side. The time was 23:00. I examined it through my

binoculars and concluded that it belonged to a steamer. As the two vessels approached one another, I was able to distinguish the steamer's green light. The distance between the two vessels was then approximately three miles. Since I could see her green light, I assumed that she could also see ours, and I therefore maintained my course.

All of our electric navigation lights, both red and green, were lit. Only the lantern at the top of the mast was oil-powered. As the approaching steamer drew nearer, she suddenly altered course towards us and displayed all three of her lights, ahead and slightly to starboard of us. Realising that she intended to cross our course, I sounded two short blasts to indicate that she should not alter to port, as that was the direction in which we were turning.

I instructed the helmsman to put our vessel to port. Had I turned starboard, I would have placed my vessel directly in her path and caused a collision. The distance between the two vessels was too short for the accident to be avoided either by stopping the engines or by going astern. The safest course of action was to turn to port.

However, the other steamer did not alter her course in the slightest. She continued at full speed and suddenly struck our boilers on the starboard side, splitting our vessel in two.

↑ On 5 September 1926, *Resimli Gazete* (Istanbul) dedicated its cover story to a report about the collision. Top right: Hasan Bey; bottom left: Jan Demons. © *Resimli Gazete*.

The survivors from the crew of the *Boz-Kourt* steamer were: Captain Bey, the skipper; Çernicibaşı Halil; Second Çernici Nizamettin Bey; Asaf from the engine room; Mustafa, a crewman; Hacı Kadir; Mehmet; Aslan Mehmet; and Mustafa Ağa.

Those who drowned were: Second Captain Hasan; Tahsin, the coal officer; İsmail of Sinop, a crewman; Ahmet; İbrahim; Hakkı; Hasan; and Osman Efendi."

Statement 2: Mustafa İbrahim of Rize, fireman of the *Boz-Kourt* provided the following statement:

"On Tuesday night, at exactly 23:05, we were proceeding on our course at a speed of six knots off the coast of Lesbos, near the Sığrı Lighthouse, when the *Lotus* appeared, coming from İzmir through the Chios Strait. According to the rules of navigation, both vessels were required to keep right. While we were continuing on the right side, the *Lotus* was approaching at a speed of fifteen knots. We assumed that she would alter course to starboard. Instead, she came dangerously close. Our captain sounded the siren twice, and we shouted warnings. Within moments, the *Lotus* put her helm hard to starboard and struck us.

She hit us directly amidships, where the engine room was located. The *Boz-Kourt* was split in two within three seconds. The stern section sank beneath the water in scarcely more time than it takes to count 'one, two, three.' The *Lotus* was already changing course at full speed. But alas, the damage had been done: the steamer had been torn apart, and the boiler had exploded.

When the boiler exploded, two stokers, Hasan of Göreme and Ahmet of Sinop, were badly burned. We were stunned by what had happened. By the time the *Lotus* realized its mistake and attempted to turn back, the bow section of the *Boz-Kourt*, having been separated at the bulkheads of the hold, was still floating on the surface.

It was rapidly filling with water and sinking lower with every passing moment. I was completely bewildered. Soon afterward, I saw on the stern section that Aslan Mehmet of Sürmene and Arab İbrahim, one of the crewmen, had been thrown against the base of the stern mast. As the stern was sinking rapidly, İbrahim, confused and terrified, clung tightly to the mast. He soon disappeared beneath the water. Aslan Mehmet climbed onto the mast and then dived into the sea.

Second Çernici Nizamettin Efendi, who was trapped on the stern section, tried to throw himself

onto the *Lotus* and catch hold of a chain, but he fell into the sea instead. A black Englishman from the *Lotus* threw him a life jacket and saved him."

Mustafa İbrahim of Rize became visibly emotional as he described the death of Second Captain Hasan Efendi. His death was more tragic than any of the others. He had been in the deckhouse, and because the Lotus *struck that part of the vessel directly, no one saw what became of him. Mustafa İbrahim of Rize then continued his account of the accident.*

"Mr. Tahsin, a former naval coal officer, was asleep in a cabin in the stern section. He disappeared beneath the water along with Steward Osman. All those who were ultimately rescued had fallen into the sea and struggled continuously to stay afloat.

Hakkı of Istanbul and I remained on the bow section for half an hour. As the bow gradually sank, Hakkı did not realise that he too was being drawn under, and he clung tightly to an iron bar. He sank into the sea just like that. I held on to a piece of wood and swam for about half an hour. Then a lifeboat from the *Lotus* reached me.

↑ Captain Hasan Bey (left) and first officer Jan Demons (right) before the Istanbul Criminal Court on 17 September 1926. From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

"We acknowledge and appreciate the assistance and rescue efforts organized on behalf of the crew of the Boz-Kourt.

It was thanks to the five lifeboats that the Lotus *immediately lowered to the sea, and to the superhuman efforts of her crew, that ten men from our vessel were saved.*

They were cared for, clothed, and comforted aboard the Lotus *until Constantinople."*

↑ On 11 September 1926, *Le Quotidien* (Paris) published the above note signed by the *Boz-Kourt's* captain, engineer, and boatswain.

When they pulled us from the sea and brought us aboard the *Lotus* steamer, they treated us well. They gave us food and asked after our condition. But once we arrived here, those from the *Lotus* would not even look us in the face, nor have they given us any opportunity to speak, even today."

Statement 3: Mustafa, son of İbrahim, crew of the *Boz-Kourt*, gave the following testimony after repeatedly stating that he had suffered memory loss as a result of the accident:

"I was asleep. I heard Captain Hasan shouting: 'The ship is coming straight at us!' I got up immediately. Captain Hasan sounded two blasts on the siren. But the other vessel did not reduce its speed. I tried to grab hold of the *Lotus's* port-side light, but it passed by too quickly. I could not hold on to it and threw myself into the sea. My friend Hakkı did not know how to swim. He would not jump into the water because he was afraid that sharks would eat him. Because of that, he drowned."

Statement 4: Mustafa, son of Ahmet, helmsman of the *Boz-Kourt*:

"I was the helmsman of the *Boz-Kourt*. At 20:00, I handed over the watch to Mehmet and went to bed. While I was asleep, I heard two blasts on the siren. What could that mean in the middle of the open sea? I suspected that an accident had occurred. I got up, put on my coat and hat, and headed out. That moment, the *Lotus* struck us. The force of the impact threw me five or ten steps forward. I fell face down. Meanwhile, water came rushing in from all sides."

Statement 5: Salih bin Abdullah, the *Boz-Kourt's* deck boatswain, described the accident as follows:

"I was asleep, fully clothed, when I heard two blasts on the siren. It was our siren, as has already been described. I got up immediately and saw a steamer approaching us. I ran up onto the deck. Our captain was shouting: 'What kind of captain is that? I am turning to port, and he is turning to starboard and coming straight at us!'

The way the *Lotus* came upon us terrified us. The moment she struck us, our vessel was destroyed. She was moving very fast, at least ten knots. She

slowed down only after the collision. I judged this from the wake the steamer left behind her. I have been a sailor for 30 years and have served on all kinds of steamers. I can estimate a vessel's speed at a glance.

The *Lotus* was moving both rapidly and ahead at the moment of the collision. After striking us, she altered course. I inferred this from the fact that a rope from our stern became entangled around the *Lotus*'s port propeller. Indeed, that rope was later removed in Istanbul with the assistance of a diver."

Source: Excerpts of the trial reproduced in Hasan Kaya, *The Lotus Case in the Press* (Marmara University 2009), translated by Serde Atalay.

LA VÉRITÉ sur l'abordage du "Boz-Kourt" par le "Lotus"

[DE NOTRE ENVOYÉ SPÉCIAL]

CONSTANTINOPLE, 30 septembre. — Au moment où le lieutenant Desnons rentre en France, on lira peut-être avec intérêt un récit de l'affaire du *Lotus*. Certains ont voulu voir dans l'acte des autorités turques un geste de xénophobie, ou simplement d'hostilité. L'affaire est désormais entre les mains des juristes français et turcs qui vont pouvoir en discuter posément dans le calme de la Haye ; abstenons-nous donc de commentaires passionnés, et tenons-nous-en à la vérité toute nue. C'est pourquoi j'ai cru devoir donner à cet exposé la loyale sécheresse d'un procès-verbal.

* * *

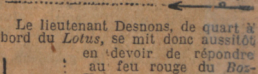
Le 2 août dernier, par nuit claire, le *Lotus*, venant de Smyrne à destination de Constantinople, achevait de contourner la pointe de My-

Le commandant du « Boz-Kourt »

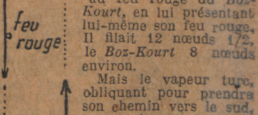
tilène et s'apprêtait à mettre le cap sur le nord, quand il aperçut un feu rouge. C'était le vapeur turc *Boz-Kourt*, qui paraissait aller vers le sud-ouest. Il était 11 heures 30.

Le feu rouge indique *bâbord* (le côté gauche du bateau dans le sens de la marche), *tribord* est marqué d'un feu vert.

Le règlement de la mer veut que l'on présente au navire que l'on va croiser le feu de la couleur qu'il laisse voir. Si les deux bâtiments faisant route inverse continuent alors chacun droit devant soi, ils s'évitent automatiquement, comme le montre ce petit croquis.



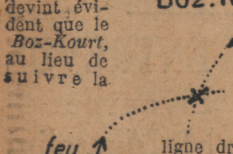
Le lieutenant Desnons, de quart à bord du *Lotus*, se mit donc aussitôt en devoir de répondre au feu rouge du *Boz-Kourt*, en lui présentant lui-même son feu rouge. Il filait 12 nœuds 1/2, le *Boz-Kourt* 8 nœuds environ.



Mais le vapeur turc, obliquant pour prendre son chemin vers le sud, sans tenir compte, semble-t-il, du *Lotus*, poursuivit sa marche à allure normale. Or, de son côté, le *Lotus*, pour effectuer la manœuvre imposée par le règlement, avait dû virer vers l'est.

(Le *Lotus* présente son feu rouge. Le *Boz-Kourt* oblique au sud. Les deux routes vont se couper au point X.)

Bientôt il devint évident que le *Boz-Kourt*, au lieu de suivre la



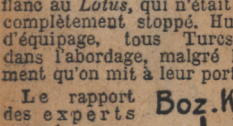
ligne droite, allait venir se placer sur le chemin que le *Lotus* ne traçait que pour l'éviter.

Le lieutenant Desnons agit alors comme un chauffeur d'automobile qui fait une brusque embardée pour échapper à une collision. Il lança le commandement : « A droite toute ! » fit stopper ses deux machines, abaissant d'un coup sa vitesse à moins de 5 nœuds. Et, pour accentuer le mouvement, il mit son hélice de tribord en marche arrière, cherchant à accomplir ainsi un tour complet sur lui-même.

(Le *Lotus* fait « à droite toute », son hélice tribord le tire en arrière.)

Réveillé par le bruit des ordres, le commandant Blancheur, dont la chambre est attenante à la passerelle, intervint et fit mettre la seconde hélice en marche arrière. Mais le *Boz-Kourt* ne s'associa pas à la manœuvre. Persistant à filer droit, au lieu de virer à gauche et sans seulement ralentir, il présenta le flanc au *Lotus*, qui n'était pas encore complètement stoppé. Huit hommes d'équipage, tous Turcs, périrent dans l'abordage, malgré l'empressement qu'on mit à leur porter secours.

Le rapport des experts commis par



les juges turcs, constate que le *Boz-Kourt*, a « créé le danger d'abordage » et n'a « rien fait pour le conjurer ».

Le lieutenant Desnons, au contraire, a manœuvré dès le début selon le règlement et a tenté l'impossible pour atténuer la gravité de l'accident.

On lui reproche seulement d'avoir omis d'aviser le *Boz-Kourt* par un coup de sifflet qu'il commandait « à droite toute ! » Mais ce coup de sifflet, prévu en effet par le règlement, et négligé dans la gravité de la circonstance, n'eût rien changé aux conséquences d'une collision dès lors inévitable.

↑ Report about the proceedings against Bey and Demons in *Le Journal* (Paris) on 1 October 1926. © Bibliothèque nationale de France.

On the Lotus 2 August 1926

Upon arriving in Constantinople, the French officer in charge of the Lotus *at the time of the collision, Jan Demons, gave the following account, accompanying his words with careful gestures:*

"The time was 23:00. I saw a light on the horizon. The distance between us was about six or seven miles. I realised that it was a ship. It continued to draw closer. Eventually, the distance between us was approximately one and a half miles. At that point, I saw her red light. I altered course slightly to starboard. Shortly thereafter, the distance decreased even further. The *Boz-Kourt* made no change in course. Then, all of a sudden, she altered her direction. The distance between us was now only about half a mile.

I felt it necessary to take evasive action. I ordered the starboard propeller to be put astern, because I could still see the *Boz-Kourt's* red light continuously. Soon afterward, however, she suddenly turned to port. The red light disappeared, and in an instant the *Boz-Kourt* was directly ahead of me. The danger was now extremely close. From the bridge, the commander shouted, 'Full astern!'. Yet I had already given that order and had, by that moment, also ordered the port propeller astern.

FRANCE TO ASK BIG INDEMNITY OF TURKEY IN THE LOTUS CASE

Indignation Continues Over Arrest and Detention of French Officer in Constantinople

By SISLEY HUDDLESTON

By Special Cable

PARIS, Sept. 14—After 40 days' detention in a Constantinople prison because the Turkish Government charged him with responsibility in the sinking of the Turkish freighter, Bozcourt, Lieutenant Desmons of the French liner Lotus is at last free. The Turks released him on Monday as a result of the pressure applied by the French Premier, Raymond Poincaré, on the Turkish Ambassador at Paris. Bail was fixed at £T6000.

Dispatches from Constantinople indicate that the Court will return a verdict tomorrow acquitting the Frenchman. Experts appointed by the court to investigate are declared to have decided that the Bozcourt captain was more responsible for the collision than Lieutenant Desmons on the Lotus. French newspapers continue to point out in front page articles that the Turkish conduct of the case has been indefensible and in direct violation of international law.

Le Matin said today: "Turkey has violated international law, but she has committed more particularly an infraction of the Treaty of Lausanne which she signed freely and ratified in good and in due form. The abuse of which she is guilty, therefore, is much more serious than would be merely an isolated incident. It interests all nations that hope to carry on regular relationships with Turkey and to treat it as a modern and civilized power. The sensitiveness of Turkish opinion and the memories of recent capitulations are not enough to excuse the Angora Government."

The Petit Parisien referred to the incident as stupid and odious and declared that Lieutenant Desmons has been treated worse than the prisoners of war held in Turkey during the war. The case is to be held by the Hague Court where the French claim it properly belongs, as the collision occurred in Greek waters. France will claim a large indemnity to satisfy Lieutenant Desmons for moral injuries sustained while confined for 40 days at Constantinople.

HAGUE COURT UPHOLDS TURKEY IN COLLISION CASE

Presiding Judge Rules to Break Tie Vote; No International Law Violated.

By the Associated Press.

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, Sept. 8.—The Permanent Court of International Justice today pronounced judgment in the Lotus case between France and Turkey, holding that Turkey's action did not constitute a violation of the principles of international law. The Judges were equally divided, and the president of the court cast the deciding vote.

↑ A note about the *Lotus Case* before the Permanent Court of International Justice in *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston) on 14 September 1926. As the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (St. Louis) reports (right) on 8 September 1927, France lost the case against Turkey. Both newspaper clippings are from the Internet Archive.

However, it was impossible either to reduce speed sufficiently or to avoid the collision. A vessel such as the *Lotus* will continue to make way for a considerable distance even after her engines have been reversed. Consequently, I carried out all the manoeuvres that the situation required."

Three members of the French crew testified that they had first seen the Boz-Kourt's *red navigation light, and one of them stated that the green light became visible shortly thereafter:*

"We were in the smoking room when, all of a sudden, a collision occurred. Everyone was thrown into panic. People jumped out of their bunks, shouting in alarm and crying out in fear. Complete chaos ensued. It took nearly an hour to restore calm among the passengers aboard the steamer.

Meanwhile, when we looked out to sea, we saw a steamer sinking about 100 metres away. Lifebuoys and lifeboats were immediately lowered, and those in the water were rescued.

We reject the allegation, made by an American passenger, that the master of the *Lotus* was drunk."

Source: Excerpts of the trial reproduced in Hasan Kaya, *The Lotus Case in the Press* (Marmara University 2009), translated by Serde Atalay.

Marseille le 21-8-26

Chère sœur

Me voilà maintenant arrivé à Marseille et je ne sais encore quand nous embarquerons car à ce qu'il paraît nous sommes déjà près de huit cents à embarquer et nous partirons en deux fois étant qu'un bâtiment ne peut transporter que 650 passagers mais autant je préfère rais partir la première fois comme j'attendre la deuxième peut être que je serais pas plus mal surtout que maintenant la mer est calme mais j'aurais peut être plus de chance d'être plus près de Beyrouth. Toujours en bonne santé et désire que vous êtes de même

Que j'embrasse de tout son cœur Eloi Abousse

CAPITAINE POSTALE

ton frère

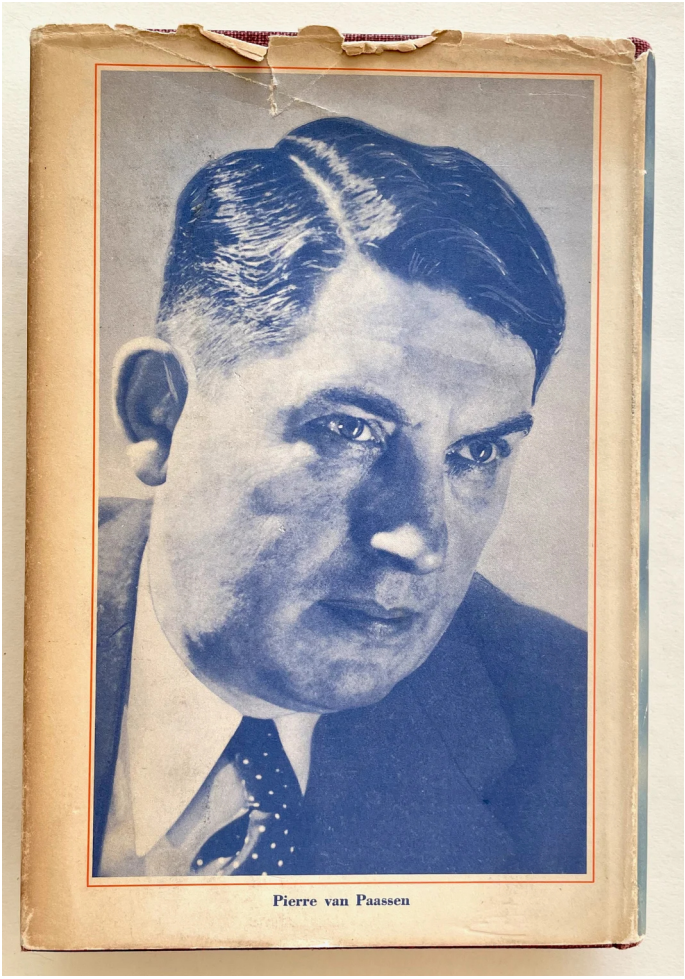
Marseille 21 August 1926

Dear sister,

I have finally arrived in Marseille. I do not yet know when we will board since it would seem that we are already close to eight hundred meant to board, and since the ship can only transport 690 passengers at a time we will have to depart in two groups. I would be alright with leaving with the first group or waiting for the second tour. I hope I will not be ill, especially now that the sea is calm, but perhaps I will have more luck when I am in Beirut. I am still in good health and I hope that you are too.

Your brother who sends you all his love.

Eloi



↑ Pierre van Paasen (ca. 1940) on the back cover of *That Day Alone* (Dial Press 1941). © Jenny Kaase.

On the Lotus 21 August 1926

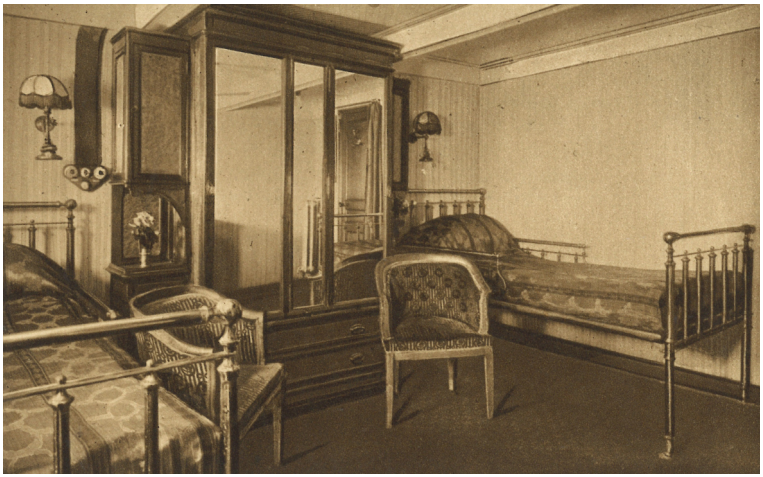
I booked passage on August 21, 1926 on the SS *Lotus*, a half freight, half passenger ship on the Levant run, with Beirut as ultimate destination. It was the cheapest mode of transportation then in existence.

Something must be said about the *Lotus*, for she was and perhaps still is a rarity in the annals of shipping and sea-faring. I do not know where that boat was built, but she was condemned as unseaworthy as far back as 1911. However, in the First World War she was bravely ferrying French troops to Salonica. The *Lotus* was twice torpedoed as a troopship, but each time succeeded in reaching port without losing a man. She had a charmed life.

The *Lotus* became a favourite in the pilgrim traffic to and from the Holy Land. In those years her name, perfumed as it is with I don't know what Buddhist or Chinese religious flavour, appeared as a curious anomaly on the notice boards of Catholic churches all over France announcing this or that diocese's annual pilgrimage to Palestine.

I made three of my dozen journeys to the Holy Land on the *Lotus*, the first in 1920, the second in 1927 and once again in 1929. Then I lost sight

De Luxe Suite



De Luxe Cabin

of her until one day in 1936 I spotted her familiar hulk in the harbour of Massawa in Eritrea. She wore a new coat of paint and was otherwise camouflaged, but I promptly verified her identity by going on board and finding my initials which I had carved in the railing of a lower deck ten years earlier.

We got away with only six hours' delay when the sun was setting. The delay was caused by a short circuit. Some flames and a lot of smoke issued from one of the first-class cabins. Firemen from the shore and technicians fixed things up with that pleasant Marseillaise hilarity which always reminds me of the exuberance of a country fair. A musical band, standing on the wharf and consisting of an accordion player, a trombone player, and a kettledrummer, whiled away the hours of waiting with alternate renditions of *Madelon* and *Le Chant du Départ* ('The Parting Song'), evidently the only two items in their repertoire.

Shortly after the *Lotus* backed out of the harbour and the captain got her nose into the east wind, all of us, passengers and crew, assembled on the port side of the vessel to gaze at and salute the great statue of *Notre-Dame de la Garde* (Our Lady of the Watch), towering on top of the church on the highest cliff to the east of the city of Marseilles. An Irish Catholic bishop, standing by the rail on

the top deck, intoned the old hymn *Stella Maris* (Star of the Sea) and led in the recitation of evening prayers. Passengers and crew joined in the singing and prayers, except the captain, who was too busy on the bridge.

Right after the hymn, there arose from below decks the sound of tumult, of stamping and bellowing, of roaring and yelling, as if a pack of wild beasts were crying for food. It turned out that in the hold we were carrying a battalion of Senegalese *tirailleurs*, sharpshooters from France's colony in the African bush... Our *tirailleurs* were bound for Syria, which was then under French mandate. The quarters they occupied on the *Lotus* were the space ordinarily reserved for third-class or steerage passengers. The entrance to this section of the ship lay at the foot of a stairway where a gate with steel bars confined the Senegalese to a space filled with cots and hammocks. The heat in that pestiferous hole was so intense that the Africans, who had come aboard several days before the ship's sailing, had taken off their clothes. When you looked down the stairway leading to the iron gate you could usually see some of the naked soldiers sitting on their haunches.

Above the quarters of the Senegalese lay the cabins for second-class passengers, some twenty-five or thirty, of which I occupied one. Above the second-

class deck were the accommodations for the first-class passengers. These, one hundred and sixty men and women or thereabouts, were Roman Catholics from County Mayo going on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Their leader was Father Marie Joseph Lagrange, the bishop who intoned the hymn as we passed *Notre-Dame de la Garde*.

There was also a batch of fourth-class passengers. But these did not come on board until we had crossed the Mediterranean and touched for a few hours at Oran on the Algerian coast on the evening of the day after our departure from Marseilles. The fourth-class passengers had no cabins and no food was provided for them. They were herded together on the forward part of the second-class deck, ate the provisions they had brought themselves and twice a day formed into closely serried ranks, bending and prostrating themselves while facing in an easterly direction.

They were Mohammedans, Arabs and Berbers who, we were told, had travelled a long way before boarding ship in Algiers. They presented a very sad spectacle; most of them were old men who were fulfilling their last desire, to die in the comforting nearness of the Kaaba, the building in the court of the Great Mosque at Mecca which contains the famous Black Stone. The ship's doctor submitted them to a cursory examination as they

Second Class Cabin

Third Class Cabin

came or were carried or dragged on board, some of them lame, others shaking with palsy. The doctor rejected only those whose condition excluded the least shred of hope of remaining alive until the port of destination. He proved to be an excellent diagnostician; we lost only one passenger on that trip, an old man more than ninety years of age, whose frail and shrivelled body was wrapped in a few rags and weighted down with a stone to sink quickly out of sight just as we passed Stromboli late in the evening on our fourth day out. The ship didn't even slow down for the funeral.

Except for my immediate neighbours on the right and left, one a Scottish engineer on the Khedivial Mail Line by the name of McGillicuddy, the other an officer of the Kenya police who was of Boer-Dutch extraction and stationed at Nairobi, I do not remember any of the people placed at the dining room table's starboard side. My opposites on the port side, however, I remember very vividly, probably because I was more or less compelled to look at their faces for a period of an hour and more three times a day. It is no exaggeration to say that we made up one of the strangest assortments of the human species ever to gather around one common board. Indeed, looking in from the outside a benevolent observer may well have taken us for a miniature League of Nations.

Since the electric current failed on the second day out, we dined by the light of one solitary oil lamp suspended from the ceiling. This lamp diffused a warm reddish glow through the dining room but had one disadvantage: the light was so feeble that you couldn't see very well what you were eating. Not that this mattered a great deal; everything you picked up from your plate was excellent. Our cook, *Monsieur François Gaspillon*, a native of Nice, modestly boasted that he could make a superior dish from discarded cigarette butts if he put his mind to it.

At the right hand of Father Lagrange who, as the steamship company's oldest customer, sat at the head of the table, was his colleague, Father Pierre Dhorme, a much younger man but already a scholar of international reputation. Father Dhorme was professor of Assyrian, Chaldean and cognate languages at the Dominicans' School for Biblical Research in Jerusalem.

Next to M. Dhorme sat the *Vicomte de Pelletan de Chèvre*, an officer in the 16th Regiment of Dragoons stationed at St. Germain-en-Laye in France, but now, because of his knowledge of Arabic, temporarily attached to the French general staff in Syria. He was a bit of a snob and kept pretty well to himself during the journey. The vicomte conversed only with the two French clerics,

scarcely deigning to take notice of the lesser breeds around the table. I heard him tell the priests once that he did not really belong in second class, but the first-class cabins all having been reserved for the Irish pilgrims, he had no choice.

On his left side the vicomte had to put up with a Greek merchant with a long unpronounceable name who was travelling from New York to Alexandria and who had made a stopover of ten days in Paris. This man volunteered the information that he dealt in *loukoums*, a sort of Turkish delight, a confection of jellylike consistency also known as jujube, a word which describes the stuff exactly; to say it is to taste it. My friend the doctor had different ideas about the nature of the Greek's merchandise, but he told me to keep my mouth shut on the subject if I wanted to avoid what he called "dangerous complications."

I have mentioned all the *pièces de résistance* seated at the long dining room table but for one individual who cannot be passed over in silence. He was that valiant servant of the Lord, the Reverend Mr. Elmer Brocklebank of Kansas City, an official of the Sudan Inland Mission on his way back to his post at Khartum. In his person he represented the entire American contingent on the passenger list.

First Class Lounge

First Class Dining Room

This gentleman took a delight in saying grace in a voice of thunder while staring at the two Catholic priests at the head of the table with a look of unspeakable challenge. One evening he tried to get into an argument with them by blurting out his opinion, *apropos* of nothing at all, that St. Peter had never been to Rome. But the priests didn't bite, at least not at Brother Brocklebank's bait. They happened to be too busy nibbling away at one of François Gaspillon's masterful concoctions. After that incident, which occurred early in the voyage, the Inland missionary said very little except for making a declaration of "absolute" teetotalism whenever he took his seat at the table, morning, noon and night.

Then there were the three females. They were Madame Jacqueline of Beirut and her two companions, the *demoiselles* Yvonne and Denise, respectively a blonde and a brunette, the blonde tall and svelte, the other plump and dimpled. I would leave these three ladies unmentioned as perhaps too worldly a subject in relation to a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, were it not that they, on the testimony of Madame Jacqueline herself, were stopping off in Jerusalem to pray at all the holy places before proceeding by car to Beirut, the capital of Lebanon. Madame also announced that since the Irish pilgrims had taken up all the first-class space, she would donate the difference in

passage money to an orphanage in Beirut, a statement which was generously applauded by all. Next to the three ladies sat the pasha, as we called him. He was a Moroccan sheik dressed in magnificent white Marrakech silver-embroidered robes, a man of about sixty, with a well-trimmed little pointed beard.

The fathers left soon afterwards and had their dinner served in their cabin the next evening. And then the pasha wanted the same thing. In the course of the day he had engaged an additional cabin with communicating doors and installed the three ladies there. Then Dr. Cazou of Marseilles, who was acting *maître d'hôtel* in second class, protested that now there were not enough waiters to take care of our divided forces. There were in fact only two. The pasha said rudely that he did not care a damn; he had engaged both our waiters for his private service and we could all go to hell.

And so it came to pass that for a day or so we had to forage for ourselves in the pantry. By then we had entered the Straits of Messina and the good ship *Lotus* began to show unmistakable signs of exhaustion. She had slowed down to a snail's pace. Early in the morning we could see the city ruined by the earthquake of 1908. In the evening we saw the lights go on in Messina's streets and on the long boulevard skirting the seafront; we hadn't

moved an inch in twelve hours. The following morning when we still hadn't made any progress the two priests and I went to see the captain on the bridge. On the way we picked up Mr. McGillicuddy, the engineer. Father Lagrange, his cassock flapping in the breeze, led the way. I won't use the word 'fan' in describing his relationship with the *Lotus*; that would perhaps be going too far. I will say, though, that he was a *Lotus* connoisseur. He had gone back and forth on the old tub no less than eleven times. He knew the *Lotus* inside and out and, strange to say, in spite of all her faults and foibles and whims, seemed rather fond of her.

When we slowed down in the Straits, the priest knew at once what was wrong. "I wager," he said, "that it is the left propeller again. It should have been replaced five or six years ago." And then the following dialogue ensued between him and the captain.

"Well, *mon Capitaine*," said Father Lagrange, after shaking hands, "what's the trouble this time?"

"It's the left propeller, *mon Père*. A very big fish, perhaps a dolphin, must have got tangled up in it."

"Impossible, *mon Capitaine*."

Second Class Dining Room

Third Class Dining Room

"Why impossible, *mon Père*?"

"Because dolphins *simplement* do not get tangled up in propellers. Such behaviour on their part is absolutely unknown to ichthyologists. Moreover, it does not lie in their nature. Undoubtedly they like ships and sailors. But I am equally sure that love of propellers is definitely not one of their characteristics. I am positive, *mon Capitaine*, that the average dolphin regards a set of propellers with silent contempt. A dolphin won't go near a propeller if he can help it."

"What in hell is the matter with this auld wreck, anyway?" spoke up Engineer McGillicuddy suddenly.

"You guessed it," said the captain. "She is a wreck, that in fact is all that's the matter with her."

Suddenly, on the afternoon of the sixth day since pulling out of Marseilles, the *Lotus* gave a snort and a shake followed by what sounded like a series of explosions in the hold, and then calmly resumed her way as if nothing had happened. We had lain motionless a full forty hours and now steamed full speed ahead for the port of Alexandria.

In Alexandria the Egyptian immigration police came on board to say that only British subjects

were permitted to go ashore. The pasha protested in Arabic and soon had half the Egyptian bureaucracy and port authorities around him. The Irish pilgrims protested for exactly the opposite reason. They were assured they could go ashore, and welcome to it.

"But not because we are British subjects," they objected.

"If you say we are British subjects we'll stay on board!"

When they were told they were marked down in the books as His Britannic Majesty's beloved Irish subjects, they returned to their cabin saying: "We don't need Egypt any more than we need King George; we brought our own whisky anyway!"

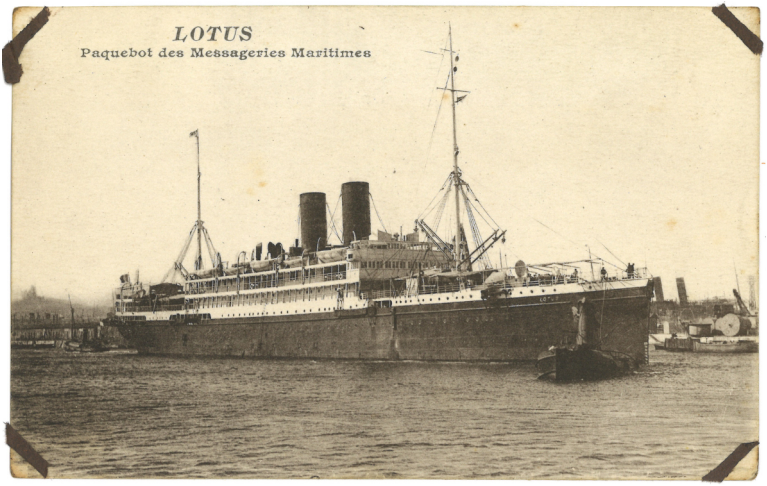
The *Lotus* weighed anchor the next afternoon. We had one more day to travel.

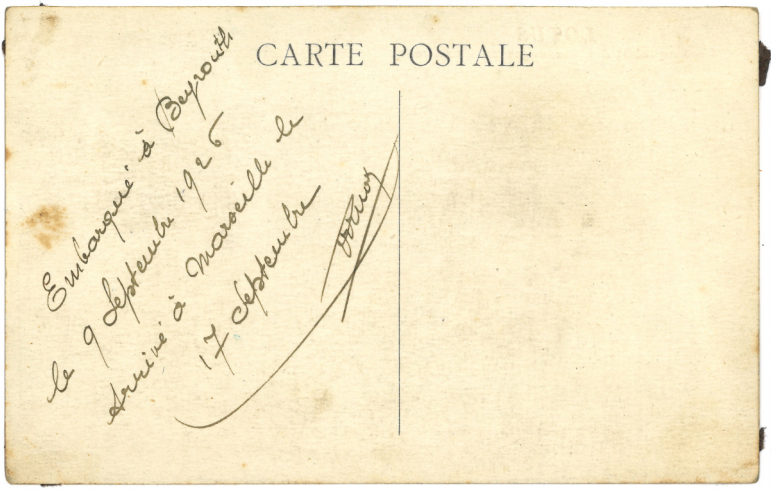
Before disembarking at Jaffa passengers were directed down to the lowest open deck where a section of the rail was removed. Each passenger in turn took up his stand in this open, unprotected space. Then a bark propelled by Arab oarsmen came alongside. One or two men kept the bark from touching the side of the passenger liner. Their boat, lifted by the waves, alternately rose

sometimes almost level with our deck and dropped back into the hollow between two successive waves.

All at once there was a shout and you felt a pair of hands gripping you by the waist and holding you at arm's length as the bark with dropped back into the hollow. In that way the passengers were lifted from the deck of the *Lotus* and deposited gently on one of the benches in the bark.

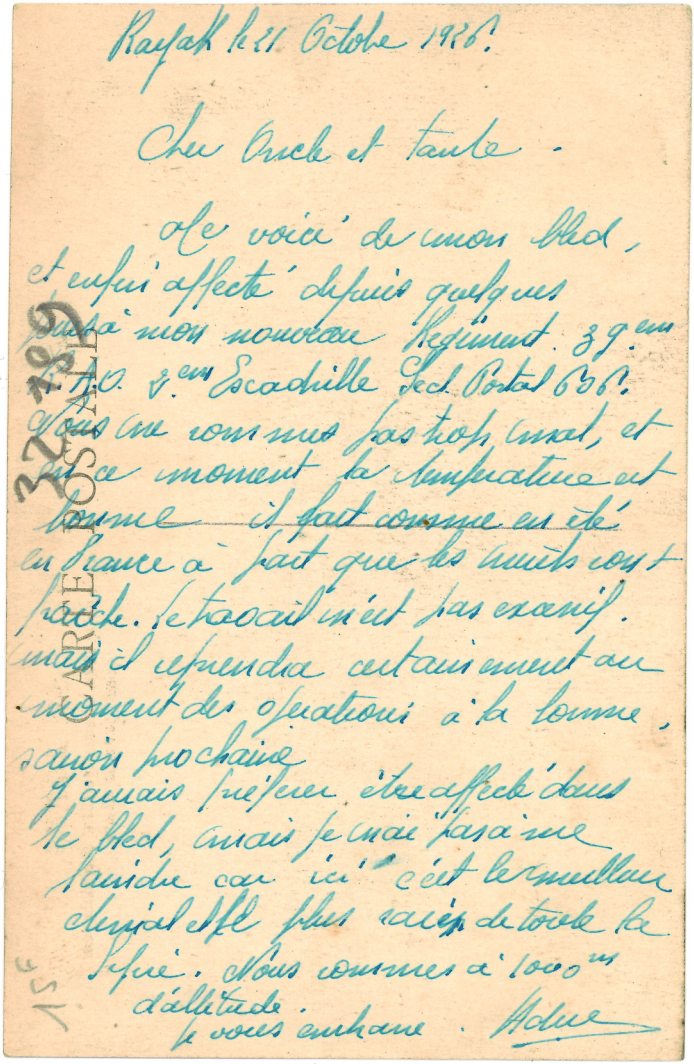
Source: Pierre van Paassen, *A Pilgrim's Vow* (Dial Press 1956) 26-44 (excerpts). All images are from the collection of the Museum of International Law.


LOTUS
Paquebot des Messageries Maritimes


CARTE POSTALE
Embarqué à Beyrouth
le 9 Septembre 1926
Arrivé à Marseille le
17 Septembre

September 1926

Boarded in Beirut on 9 September 1926.
Arrived in Marseille on 17 September.



Rayak le 21 Octobre 1916.

Chers Oncle et Tante.

Me voici de mon bled, et enfin affecté depuis quelques jours à mon nouveau Régiment. 39ème T.A.O. 2ème Escadrille Sect. Postal 636. Nous ne sommes pas trop mal, et en ce moment la température est bonne il fait comme en été en France à part que les nuits sont fraîches. Le travail n'est pas exagéré. mais il reprendra certainement au moment des opérations à la bonne saison prochaine.

J'aimais mieux être affecté dans le bled, mais je me fais à ma nouvelle existence car ici c'est le meilleur climat et le plus sain de toute la Syrie. Nous sommes à 1000m d'altitude.

Je vous embrasse. Adieu

32 789
CARTE POSTALE
15 c

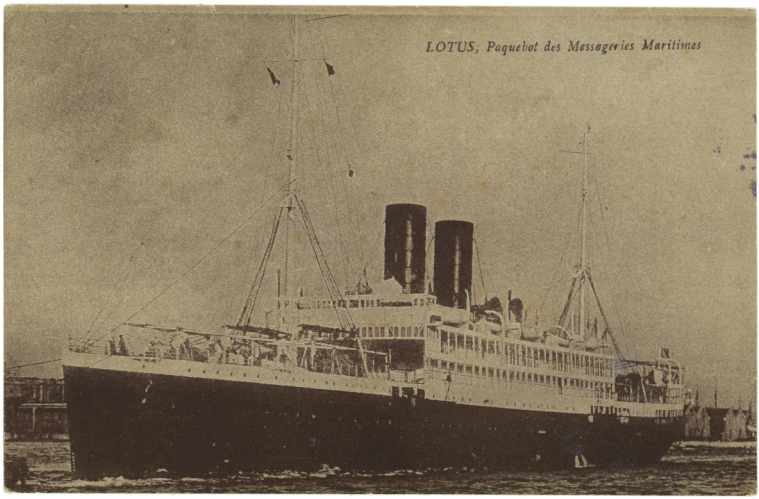
Rayak 21 October 1926

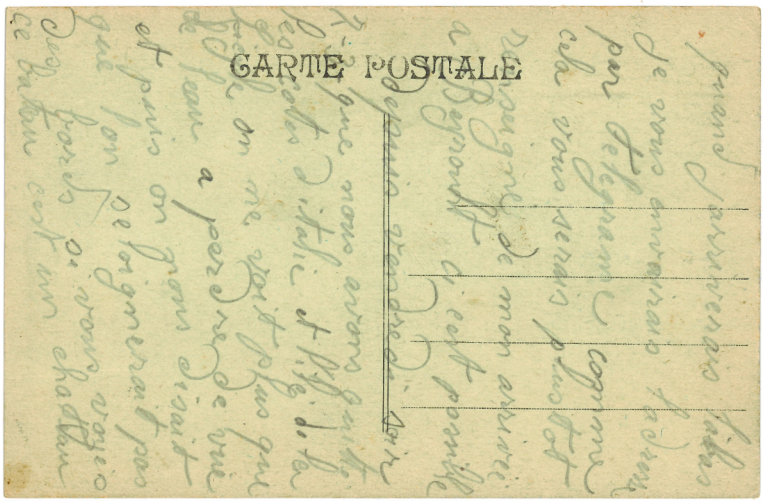
Dear Uncle and Aunt,

Here I am in my homeland, and finally joined my new regiment as of a few days ago. 39th RAO, Second Squadron, Postal Sector 606.

Things are not too bad and right now the temperature is nice. It is like a summer in France, except the nights are cool. There is not too much work but this will likely change when operations start in the next good season. I would have preferred to be based in my hometown but I need not complain because this is the best regiment of all Syria. We are 1000 meters above sea level.

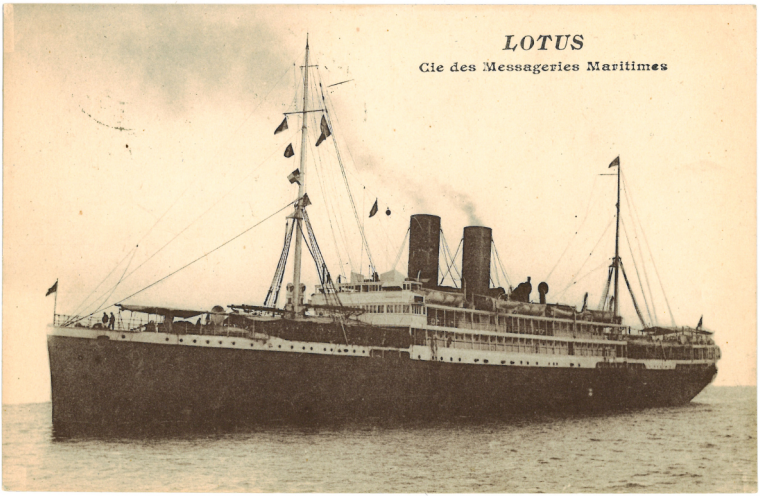
I send you love.


LOTUS, Paquebot des Messageries Maritimes


CARTE POSTALE

On the Lotus 1927

When I get there, I will send you the address by telegram so that you will be informed earlier of my arrival in Beirut, if possible. Since Friday evening we have left the coasts of Italy and the island of Sicily, and all we can see is the vastness of open water. We were told that we would not move away from the coasts. If only you could see this boat, it is as big as a castle.



CARTE POSTALE

PADUEBOT

Mademoiselle
Elisabeth Barrhard
Richterswil
Suisse

7.–

Timbre obligatoire de la République Française Marseille

On the Lotus 5 March 1927

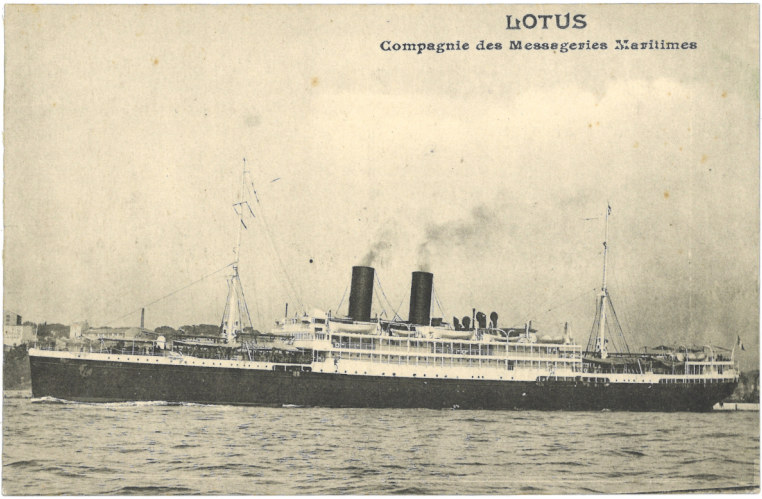
Miss Elisabeth Basshard
Richterswil
Switzerland

Dear Elisabeth,

From this ship that is a small floating hotel, I am sending you and your parents a nice souvenir. I hope you can come along sometime. Everything here is nice and good. Kitchen, cellar, etc., you can even get Mosel wine.

Warm regards,

Uncle Willy



CARTE POSTALE

Sur le Lotus le 15

Chers Amis
et Chère Gabrielle

Après une après midi et
une nuit de traversée,
pas malade, faisons escale
à Alexandrie pas mal couché
mais pas beaucoup de place
bons baisers, pas mauvais temps
de loin Albert

Mlle Gabrielle Petit
217 Rue de Lille
La Madeleine
(Nord)

France

On the Lotus 1928

Miss Gabrielle Pety
217 Rue de Lille
La Madeleine
(Nord)
France

Dear friends and dear Gabrielle,

After one afternoon and one overnight crossing, I am not feeling ill. We are stopping in Alexandria. I did not sleep badly, but there was not much space. Not bad weather.

Love from afar,

Albert

BUREAU INTERNATIONAL POUR LA SUPPRESSION DU TRAFIC EN FEMMES ET ENFANTS.
COMITÉ CENTRAL POUR L'EGYPTE.

SECRÉTAIRE: MISS CICELY McCALL
~~30 SULEIMAN PACHA~~
~~LE CAIRE.~~
Pension Syracuse,
Alexandria.

TÉLÉPHONE: BUSTAN 1193.

May 7th, 1929.

Dear Mr. Sempkins,

I got your letter of May 24th as I was starting for Alexandria to spend a month here. I went back to Cairo for two days to make the enquiries you wanted from Russell, and should have liked to have talked to the Alexandria Police too before writing. But that is impossible as to-day is Friday, the Egyptian Sunday, and everything is shut.

Russell Pasha gives you a free hand to do what you like with the two statements of Andrée Guillet and Augusta Pellissier, - and the more the better. In Cairo, the French consul and the French Minister both took great interest in the case, and Baker Bey (of the Police) thought the Minister had written to some authority in France. The Police have not written to anyone in France, beyond arranging that Andrée, who was repatriated, should be met by, I think, the Amies de la jeune fille at Marseilles. She was put in charge of the Captain for the voyage. Russell Pasha would like you to send the matter up to the Police official in France you spoke of, and do anything else you think desirable. He is doing no more in the matter.

As I said in a previous letter the statement in the League of Nations Report that "there has been no recurrence of clandestine embarkation etc" is farcical. There has been no further case brought to the notice of the Police in Cairo. As I said I have not yet had time to see the Police here. The Cairo Police tell me there will probably be no further case for some months, - say till September, - as four French pimps were deported about a fortnight ago. But Jules Arency, the stoker on the "Lotus" mentioned in Augusta's statement, is, so far as I know, still on the Lotus. His two brothers are in the trade, one works Egypt, the other S. America. And of course how many cases there have been which have escaped the Police no one knows. The Cairo Police have the reputation of being very much more active in this matter than the Alexandrian, - that is putting it mildly. It is unfortunate that the new commandant of Police here in Alexandria should have had to leave Egypt almost immediately after his appointment to arrange for the King's tour in Europe. But Ablitt Bey is a good man, and I think will be a good friend to us. The acting Comm., Remanda Bey, is obliging, but will never set the Nile on fire. The others I don't know well yet. But I do know that all our trouble in Cairo comes from cases that have escaped the notice of the Police in Alexandria.

↑ Letter by Cicely McCall of the International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children to Mr. Sempkins of the Bureau's London branch (7 May 1929).
© LSE: Women's Library, 4IBS/6/034.

On the Lotus 28 September 1928

In a letter, dated 26 April 1929, the Cairo Branch of the International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children sent to Mr. Sempkins of the Bureau's London branch the following statement by Augusta Pellissier who was trafficked aboard the Lotus *in September 1928:*

"My acquaintance with Adé grew closer and he started making proposals, like leaving to Egypt with him to open a ball-room there. Three weeks later, I decided to accept his offer and he asked me to go and live with him, at Rue de la Cathédrale 1 [in Marseille], where we planned our journey.

I went and lived with him for fifteen days. It did not occur to me there was anything suspicious about him. This is how we travelled to Egypt: Adé embarked our luggage the day before the departure. On that day, at 7 a.m. he got on board on his own. One hour later, I went to the ship with a certain M. Michel, who lived with Adé. I was given a small packet I was instructed to deliver to Jules Arency, a chauffeur on board, pretending I was his wife. When I got on the ship, I was taken to Arency's cabin: he was there with Adé and another boy. Adé made the gesture of keeping my mouth shut. Arency went out of the cabin and

Extract from Miss McCall's letter.

May 17th, 1929.

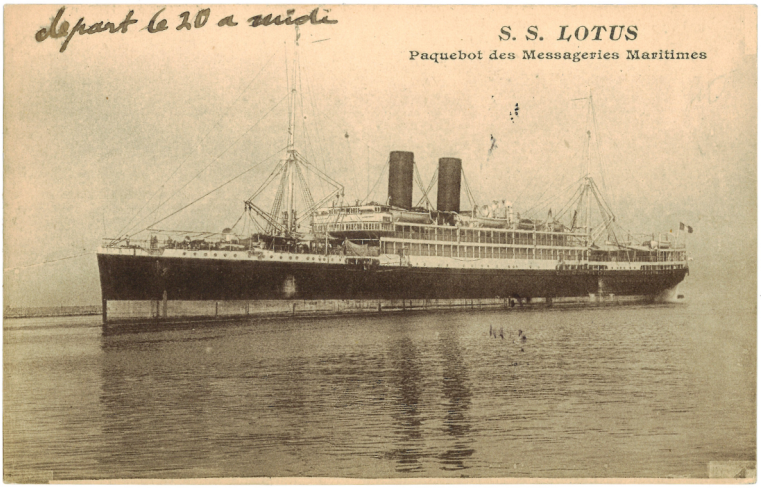
..... C.T.F.E. 336 page 8 states "Il n'existe pas de traite....." That astounding statement, I suppose, is a copy of the statement in the League of Nations Report of the special body of Experts, 1927. I can't think how the then Comm. of Police allowed such a statement to pass. The only sense in which it is true is that there is so much more traffic than in any place in Europe and so much more systematic, I should think, that it is not what Europeans understand by traffic. The two statements I sent you on April 26th are an answer to that and to Mme. de Sainte Croix and the efforts of the National Council of Frenchwomen. I wish they would make a bit more effort. It is no exaggeration to say girls come in constantly from France. I am most anxious to hear what you have done with those two statements. It is a pity you did not get them before going to Geneva. The Canal Company reported in 1927 that the "Lotus" was bringing over girls clandestinely. It is disheartening to think they are still doing precisely the same today.

↑ Letter by Cicely McCall of the International Bureau for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children to Mr. Sempkins of the Bureau's London branch (17 May 1929). © LSE: Women's Library, 4IBS/6/034.

took a look around. One hour later they took us down to the storeroom. They put us in a chest and put weights on top of it. Some hours later, when we reached the open sea, the storekeeper came and picked us up and we moved to his cabin.

We spent all the crossing in there, except for some walks at night and a couple of times when we had to be hidden because the cargo was being inspected. The first time, we were hidden in a cabin, on the side of the anchorage, almost buried alive by bags. The second time, they put us at the bottom of the bridge, among planks and one ton iron rims. We reached Alexandria on the 28th of September on the *Lotus*. At 7 a.m. Adé set foot on land dressed as a chauffeur and came back with a friend of his to pay the storekeeper. He gave him 3.000 francs, then they drank champagne together to celebrate the arrival at Alexandria. And then a chauffeur called Joseph gave me an identity card. My picture was on it but the stamped papers accompanying it were in the name of a certain Virginia (I don't remember the surname), Italian, housemaid. I disembarked around 7 or 8 at night. Three chauffeurs were waiting for me on the quay, a tattooed big man, Arency and Joseph. They told me to go through customs on my own. I was not checked nor searched at all."

Source: LSE: Women's Library, 4IBS/6/034.



CARTE POSTALE

le 20.11.928

Des bonnes souvenirs d'un amis, qui est depuis midi hor de la farance, et qui vous aime bien et qui garde des vos bons souvenirs

Cejar

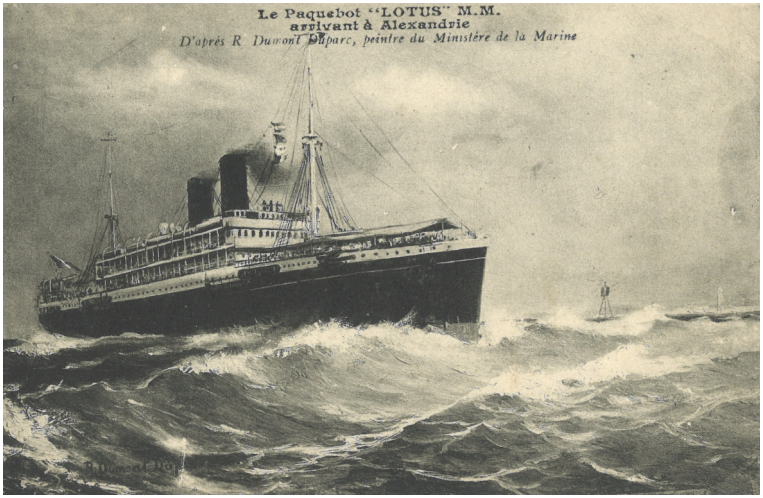
chere familla

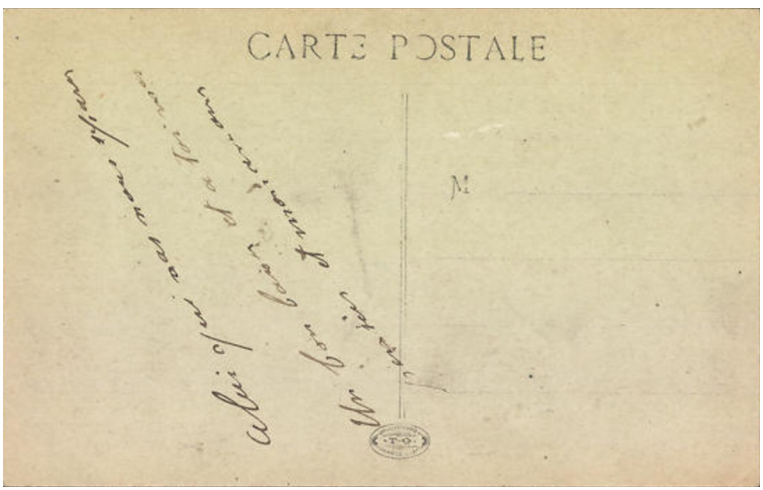
On the Lotus 20 November 1928

Departure on the 20th at midday

Dear family,

Some good memories from a friend who, since midday, is out of France and who loves you and holds fond memories of you.


Le Paquebot "LOTUS" M.M.
arrivant à Alexandrie
D'après R. Dumont Delparc, peintre du Ministère de la Marine


CARTE POSTALE

On the Lotus 1928

The ship that will bring us together.

Warmest regards, my thoughts and love are with you.

Bayrauth Le 17/2/29

L. Férid, librairie-Stamboul-Beyrouth

Bien cher Frere est belle Sœur
je viens vous tracer ces quelques
mot, pour vous donner de mes
nouvelles qui sont toujours excellente
pour le moment. Nous sommes
arrivés a Bayrauth le 12 en très
bon sport. Là nous avons trouvés
une chaleur, du mais de guiguet.
On s'est appuyerient 6 Kl à
pied, pour aller au camp, Vous
pouvez croire, que j'ai mouillé le
pail. Nous avons presque traversé
la ville.

BEYROUTH

CARTE POSTALE

Beirut 17 February 1929

Dear brother and sister-in-law,

I am writing you these few words, just to give you some news on my part, which is still excellent for the moment. We arrived in Beirut on the 12th in a very beautiful harbour. In Beirut we found a great heat, like it was July. We walked 6 hours on foot to get to the camp. You can be sure that I was soaked with sweat. We crossed almost the entire length of the city.

Voyez d'abord celle de Monira

Le Caire

11

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

Au Bord du Lotus le 29/3/23

Mon Bien Cher Papa

Je continue ma correspondance que j'ai commencée avec Monira pour décrire mon Voyage. Hier je descendis dans ma cabine vers Onze heures du soir. Le temps est redevenu calme mais l'humidité avait commencé. Un fait que je n'avais pas pris garde au commencement c'est le changement d'heure c'est-à-dire marquée l'heure du Meridien hier quand c'était douze heure et demi dans la montre du Caire on a marqué 12 heures. Aujourd'hui on a

On the Lotus 19 February 1929

My dear father,

I wish to continue the correspondence that I started with Mosaira to describe my journey. Yesterday, I went down to my cabin at around eleven in the evening. The weather has calmed down, but the humidity has started.

Something that I had not considered before beginning this journey was the time difference. I had to remember to change the hour from twelve thirty to midday yesterday, and today too.

I began my day with Mass, just like yesterday. I have nothing to tell you about my morning because after breakfast, I took a nap in a chair until ten and then I wrote a letter to my uncle. After dinner, I made the acquaintance of an officer and we played two games of chess, in which I beat him. All to say that I am having a good time, as you wished.

Finally, after the game, I took up my quill to write you these lines. A chemist who is

fait de même
J'ai commencé ma journée
par la Messe comme bien
mais je ne vien à vous
dire de la matinée car après
le déjeuner j'ai pris un
somme sur la chaise
jusqu'à dix heures et
j'ai écrit alors une lettre.
à Mon oncle et après
le dîner j'ai fais connaissance
avec un officier avec
qui j'ai fait deux parties.
d'échec que j'ai battu.
c'est vous dire que je m'amuse
et comme il faut enfin.
après le jeu je prés la
plume pour vous écrire
ces quelques lignes. Un
Chimiste qui se trouve
à bord dans le bar
explique au père Beaubois
quelque remèdes pour le
diabète je profite pour
vous donner quelque détail.
Il y a lui dit-il une
plante qu'on appelle la traînée
qui pousse en France sur
les routes et dans les jardins
plusieurs personnes ont été
guéris du diabète en la
prenant comme thé. lui
même a fait l'expérience
sur une expérience
Il dit au père aussi qui
ne voulait prendre rien
qui contient du sucre que
ce n'est pas tous les sucres
qui ne font pas
prendre mais les sucres ani-
maux dont qui sont défendus

on board with us was at the bar explaining some remedies for diabetes to Father Beaubois.

I am taking this opportunity to describe some of the details of the conversation. The chemist told him that there is this plant which is called trinia that grows in France, along the roads and in some gardens. Many people have been healed from diabetes by drinking this plant as tea, and he himself had experienced it.

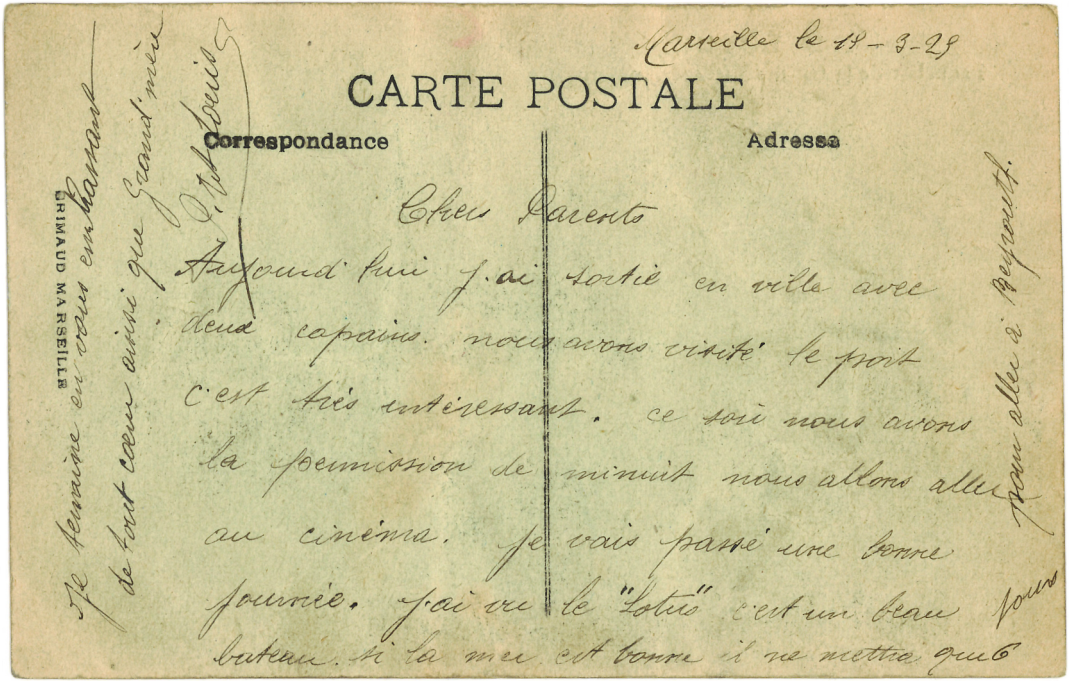
He also told the Father, who did not want to consume anything that contains sugar, that not all sugars should be prohibited, but only amidine sugars. So, he can eat grapes but should not drink wine that does not contain a lot of alcohol. I am telling you all this because I am writing as I listen to the chemist, who is a very pleasant and kind man.

Like the night before last, we had a four-hour delay during the night. The ship is advancing at very high speed and it has already managed to make up two hours from our delay.

noir ainsi il peut manger du raisin mais pas beaucoup boire du vin qui ne contient pas beaucoup d'alcool
Je vous dit cela parce que j'écrit en écoutant Monsieur le Chimiste homme très avenant et très gentille. Comme avant hier au soir nous avons eu un retard de quatre dans la nuit le bateau court à très grande Vitesse et déjà il a rattrapé deux heures et plus. Distance parcourue depuis hier midi 346 miles il reste à parcourir 736. A tout instant nous recevons des dépêches par la télégraphie sans fil. Ce soir pour les Voyageurs sont comme nouvelles chaque jour à midi. ces nouvelles sont affichées dans un tableau pour être par tout les Voyageurs

The distance we have travelled since yesterday is 344 miles. We still have 736 left to go.

We often receive dispatches by wireless telegraphy, either for the passengers or with news. Every day at midday, the news is displayed on a table so that all passengers can read them.



Marseille le 11-3-29

CARTE POSTALE

Correspondance

Adressa

Chers Parents

Aujourd'hui j'ai sorti en ville avec deux copains. nous avons visité le port c'est très intéressant. ce soir nous avons la permission de minuit nous allons aller au cinéma. je vais passé une bonne journée. j'ai vu le "Lotus" c'est un beau bateau. si la mer est bonne il ne mettra que 6 jours pour aller à Beyrouth.

Je termine en vous embrassant de tout coeur ainsi que Gaud'mès

G. Tabouis

GRIMAUD MARSEILLE

Marseille 19 March 1929

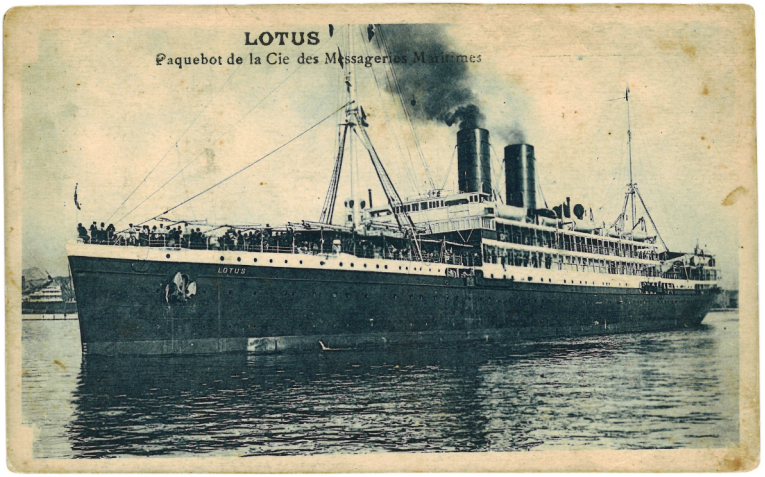
Dear parents,

Today, I went out around town with two friends. We visited the port, it was very interesting. Tonight, we have permission to stay out until midnight, we will go to the cinema.

I am going to have a good day. I saw the 'Lotus', it is a beautiful ship. If the sea is good, it will only take us six days to reach Beirut.

I am finishing this letter by sending you my love with all my heart, and to grandmother as well.

Little Louis


LOTUS
Paquebot de la Cie des Messageries Maritimes
LOTUS

CARTE POSTALE
Correspondance
Adresse

On the Lotus 1929

A souvenir from your André who loves you.

André, who embraces his sweet and dear mother with all his heart.

André, who is thinking of you all and who loves you.

Beyrouth le 26.11.24

Librairie Stamboul

Mon cher Maraf

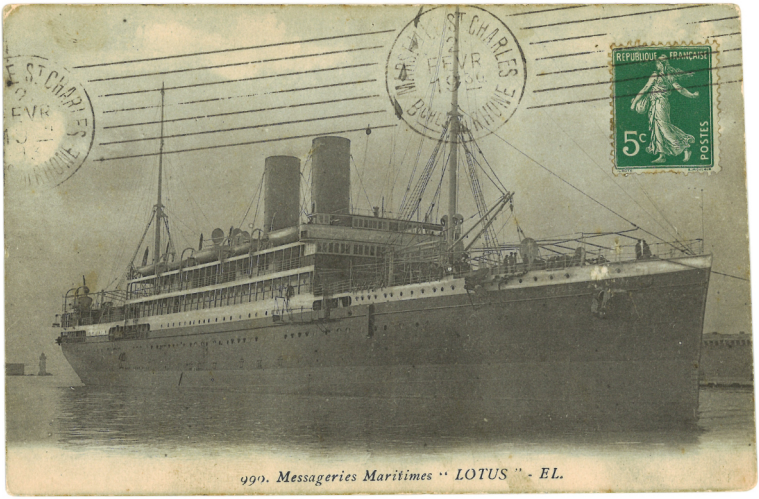
Cher ami je comprend
faire réponse à ta carte qui je
trouve me fait plaisir de voir que
tu marches vers les vieux jours de
bleu, tu me dis avoir fait un bon
voyage cela est très intéressant, je
viens subir ici la requête annuelle
du gouverneur pour ce qui concerne cette
saison ce ne sera pas très difficile
avec [illegible] il faut
espérer, tandis que nous autres
les exilés nous n'avons jamais encore
une seule goutte d'eau de l'an dernier
à toutes les heures de boire c'est très
dur fait encore chaud quand à la santé
cela ci maintient toujours un peu,
Renaud est rentré en France ce soir
est très sans même me prévenir, ni
même adieu ! je pense que ma carte
te trouvera en très bonne route. j'attend
une réponse de toi pour savoir quelque
détail sur ton sort, je te quitte en te
serrant fraternellement la main.
Mon souvenir pour toute ta famille.

Beirut 26 November 1929

My old Maran,

Please forgive me for this very long delay in responding to your letter. I assure you it gave me great pleasure to see that you have not forgotten your old buddies from the village. You tell me that you travelled well and that is the most important thing, and that you miss this old Syrian sun. And you are perhaps right because in France, this season, winter, must not be easy for you after spending the year in Beirut - now you must be freezing. Meanwhile, the rest of us exiles have not seen a single drop of water and we are now coveting those tribal dresses since it continues to be very hot. As for my health, it is still holding up. Bernard returned to France recently and he left without even warning me, without even saying goodbye. I hope that my letter finds you in good health. I shall await a response from you to know more about what you have been up to. I am leaving you now and extending you a fraternal hand.

A friend who always thinks of you.


990. Messageries Maritimes " LOTUS " - EL.
REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
5c
POSTES

CARTE POSTALE
Correspondance
Mon Nouveau Cateau
Jacq
Adresse
Mr le Poissonnet
8 Rue des Capucins
St Etienne
Loire

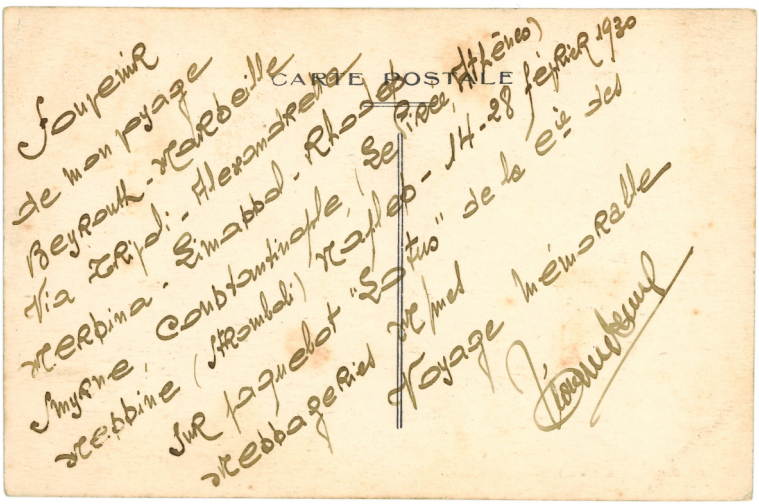
Marseille 2 February 1930

Miss Poussonnel
8 Rue des Capucins
Saint-Étienne
Loire

My new ship.

Jacques

S. S. LOTUS
Paquebot Français des Messageries Maritimes
(par grosse mer faisant la chasse à un sous-marin)


CARTE POSTALE

Marseille February 1930

A souvenir from my trip.

Beirut - Marseille, via Tripoli - Alexandria - Mersin - Limassol - Rhodes - Smyrna - Constantinople - Piraeus - Athens - Messina (Stromboli) - Naples - 14-28 February.

On the 'Lotus' - a steamer of the company Messageries Maritimes.

A memorable journey.

CARTE POSTALE

Naples, 24-7-30

Bien chère Alice,

La traversée du Pirée à Naples a été mouvementée, nous n'avons pas eu de chance la mer a pas mal remué et nous avons dû rester tout Dimanche sans manger, tout le monde a été malade. Ta mère a malgré tout pas eu trop à souffrir. Nous allons rester à Naples de 6 H du matin à 6 H du soir. Et Jeudi matin serons à Marseille d'où je vous écrirai, espérons que la mer se montrera plus. Comment allez-vous tous là-bas j'espère qu'une lettre nous dira tout cela. Il me tarde d'avoir de vos nouvelles - nous venons de passer le Stromboli que j'ai photographié - Affectueusement à vous. Je t'embrasse de tout cœur ainsi que tous tes [illegible]

NAPOLI FERROVIA 11-12 29 VII 30 VIII

POSTE ITALIANE Cent. 75

Madame
Alice Allalouf
41 rue Klisoura, 4
Salonique.
(Grèce)

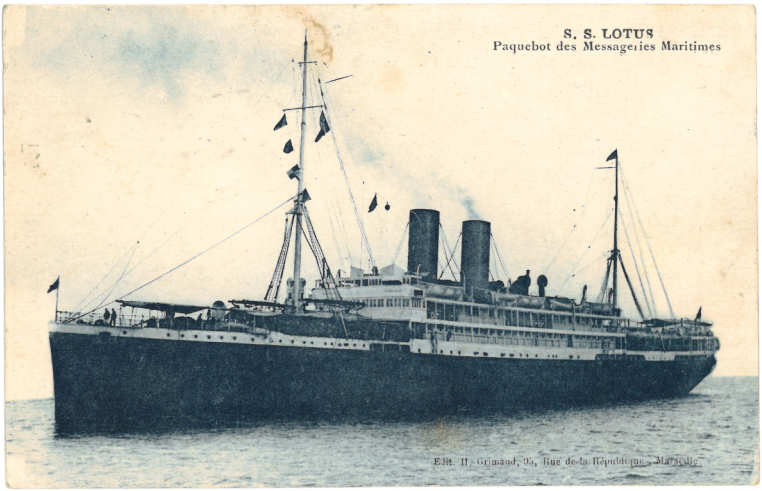
On the Lotus 24 July 1930

Mrs. Alice Allaloup
4 rue Klisousas
Salonique
Greece

Dearest Alice,

The crossing from Piraeus to Naples was quite difficult, we were not lucky. The sea was quite rough and we had to go all of Sunday without eating, everyone was sick. Your mother did not suffer too much. We will stay in Naples from 6 am to 6 pm and on Thursday morning we will be in Marseille. I will write to you. Hopefully, the sea will be less agitated. How are you? Every day I hope a letter will be there, I look forward to hearing from you. We just passed Stromboli, which I photographed.

Hello to everybody, I send you all my love.


S. S. LOTUS
Paquebot des Messageries Maritimes
Edit. H. Grimaud, 35, Rue de la République, Marseille

CARTE POSTALE
Monsieur Pierre Dupresq
Les Forges s/Milly
Oise

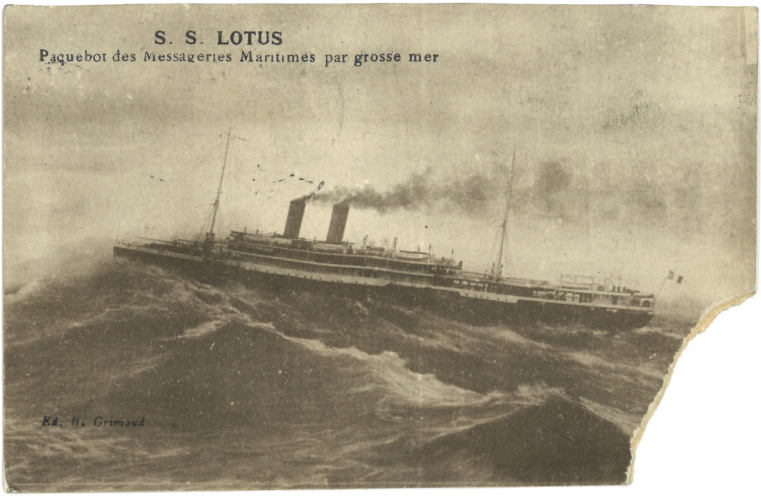
On the Lotus 30 August 1929

Mr. Pierre Dafresse
Les Forges / Milly
Oise

My dear Pierre,

Here we are, floating between the sky and the waves for 72 hours. The weather is superb, the sea is very calm. Almost nobody is sick. Only yesterday, during our passage through the Strait of Messina, some soft waves troubled some hearts upon entry to the Ionian Sea, including mine, but it was nothing more than a little seasickness.

Despite the miles that now separate us, I am thinking of you, of all of you, and I love you with all my heart, which remains steadfast.


S. S. LOTUS
Paquebot des Messageries Maritimes par grosse mer
Ed. H. Grimaud

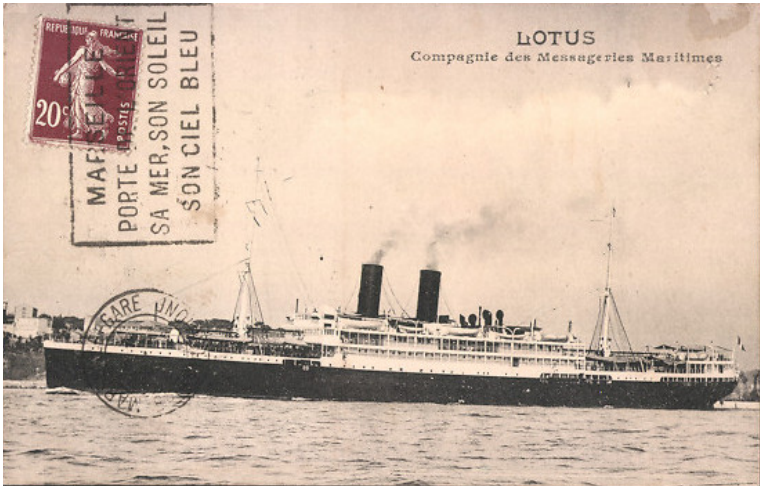
CARTE P
Miss Sallie Parnell,
1217 Chestnut St.,
Bolling Green,
Kentucky,
U. S. A.
PAQUEBOT
ALEXANDRIE
13 JUL 10

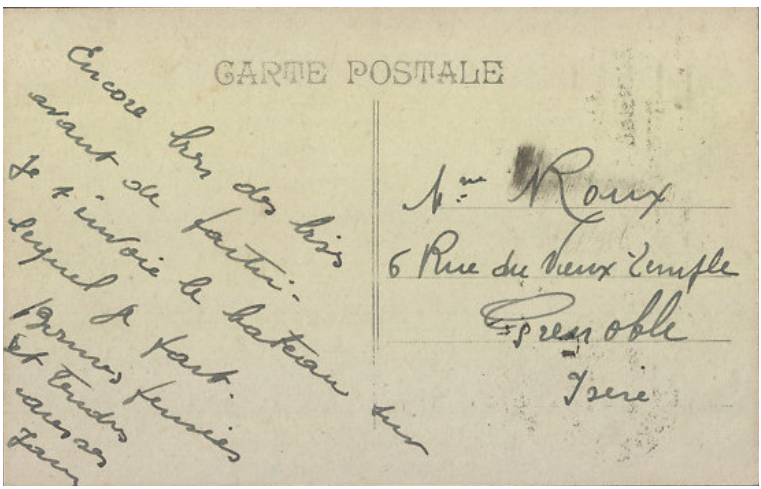
On the Lotus 13 July 1930

Miss Sallie Parnell
1217 Chestnut Street
Bowling Green
Kentucky, USA

The blue Mediterranean is right. A Greek fellow said we lied if we sent this card for we have had a very calm sea. We have a very interesting crowd of university students going home for vacation on this boat. We are learning lots and getting more thrilled every day.

We saw a volcano rising out of the…the other day. Be good…loads of love, Mary


LOTUS
Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes
SA MER, SON SOLEIL
SON CIEL BLEU


CARTE POSTALE
Encore bon des bises
avant de partir.
Je t'envoie le bateau
sur lequel je part.
Bonnes heures
et toutes
mes
Mme Roux
6 Rue du Vieux Temple
Grenoble
Isère

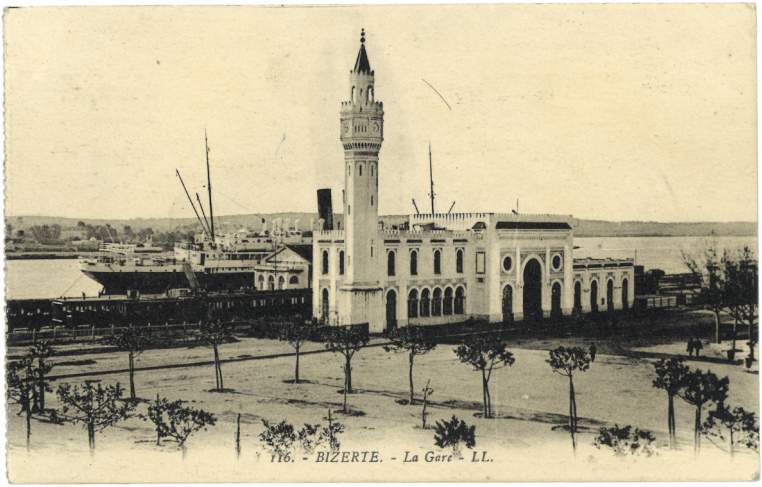
Marseille 1930

Mrs. Roux
6 Rue du Vieux Temple
Grenoble, Isère

Best wishes again before we depart. I am sending you the ship I am travelling on.

With fond thoughts and warm wishes,

Jean



116. - BIZERTE. - La Gare - LL.

CORRESPONDANCE

ADRESSE

Constantinople 26/11/30

Avec mes bonnes caresses
mes meilleurs souhaits.
Amitiés à tous

REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
40c
POSTES

COMPAGNIE MARSEILLAISE
LOTUS
MARSEILLE

Madame J. Olivier
108 Bd de la Corderie
Marseille
France

LÉVY ET NEURDEIN RÉUNIS, 44, RUE LAFAYETTE, PARIS, IMP.

Constantinople 26 November 1930

Mrs. F. Olivier
108 Boulevard de la Corderie
Marseille
France

Sending my affectionate greetings and my very best wishes.

Best wishes to everyone.

↑ Olga Tufnell flanked by Noreen Norman and Mary Luce, on the Aberdeen & Commonwealth Line, November 1931. © Palestine Exploration Fund.

On the Lotus 18 October 1931

Dearest Ma and Daddy,

The journey across France was not at all too bad and though there were six of us in the carriage, I managed to sleep most of the time with my feet on the seat opposite.

We were all English, 2 men and 1 wife (Baghdad) Iraq Railways, the two archaeologists Winkworth and Railton for Ur and self.

Breakfast at Avignon was welcome and the transit from train to boat was easy as usual. The Lotus might be worse but it is her last year in service, so one cannot expect much. The food is not bad and the company mixed. I sit between a Belgian lady and an Egyptian gent, who has to correct my Arabic exercises every day.

I succumbed yesterday soon after lunch, it was raining, windy and cold, so that there seemed nothing better to do.

I.P.
ALEXANDRIE — EMBARCADÈRE DE LA Cie DES MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

Today things are getting tropical and I foresee that I shall be wearing summer things in Alex. We stay there 2 days, which I did not quite realise, but I suppose I can fill them by going to the Museum.

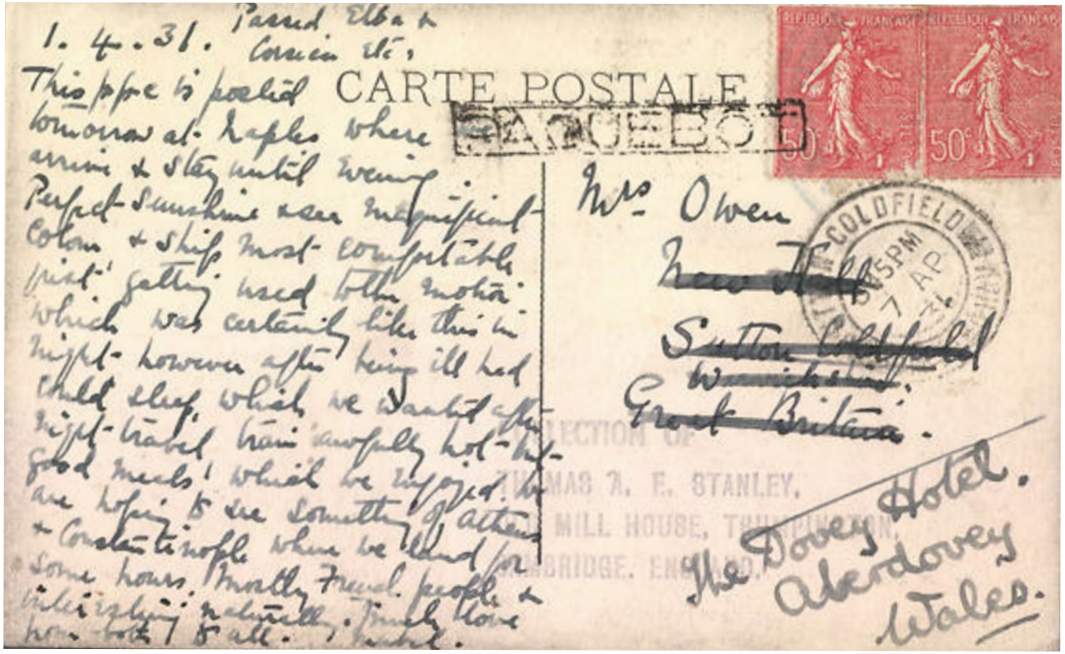
As you can imagine there is no news, except that we get to Jaffa at 9am on Wednesday… Shall post this as soon as I arrive but don't know if it will make any difference.

Much love to you both.

Ever your loving,

Olga

Source: Photo and letter, courtesy of the Palestine Exploration Fund, London (PEF-P-TUF-2, PEF/DA/TUF/167).


1. 4. 31.
Passed Elba &
Corsica this
This pace is posted
tomorrow at Naples where
arrive & stay until evening
Perfect Sunshine over magnificent
Colour & Ship most comfortable
just getting used to the motion
which was certainly like this in
night - however after being ill last
child sleep which we thought after
night - Isabel train awfully hot - but
good meals! which be enjoyed
are hoping to see something of Athens
& Constantinople when we land for
some hours. Really friendly people &
delightful weather, lovely blue
sea - back to all. Love
CARTE POSTALE
PAQUEBOT
Mrs Owen
Sutton Coldfield
Warwickshire
Great Britain.
The Dovey Hotel.
Aberdovey
Wales.
COLDFIELD
7 AP
1931

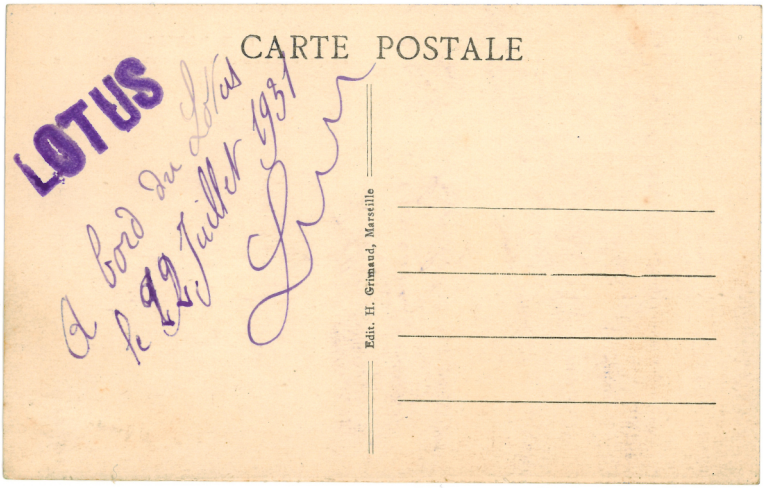
On the Lotus 1 April 1931

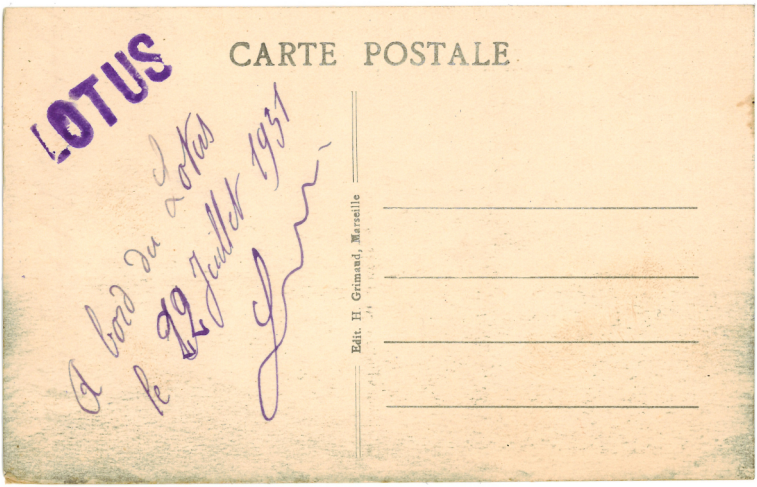
Mrs. Owen
The Dovey Hotel
Aberdovey
Wales

This ship is bound tomorrow for Naples where we arrive + stay until evening. Perfect sunshine was magnificent - cabin and ship most comfortable. Just getting used to the weather, which was certainly like this in Tripoli, however after being ill had little sleep which we wanted after night-travel train. Thankfully hot good meals which we enjoyed. We are hoping to see something of Athens + Constantinople where we land for some hours. Mostly travel. People are interesting naturally.

Much love from both to all.

Michael

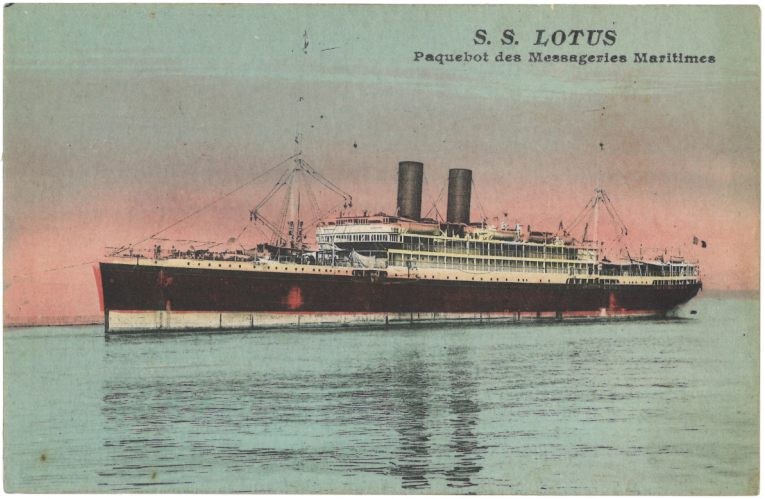

CARTE POSTALE
LOTUS
A bord du Lotus
le 29 Juillet 1931
Edit. H. Grimaud, Marseille


CARTE POSTALE
LOTUS
A bord du Lotus
le 29 Juillet 1931
Edit. H. Grimaud, Marseille

On the Lotus 22 July 1931

Aboard the Lotus, on 22 July 1931.

Aboard the Lotus, on 22 July 1931.



TH Bar

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

CARTE POSTALE

Tous les pays étrangers n'acceptant pas la correspondance au recto, se renseigner à la poste.

Bordeaux le 11/12/34

CORRESPONDANCE

ADRESSE

Ma chérie

Ci-joint, le bon des délégations et les 100f que je t'envoie pour tes produits de toilette. Je vois que je suis gentil quand tu as été bien sage. Et si tu aimes bien ton petit bonhomme il n'y aura jamais rien de trop beau pour lui.

Encore de gros bisous de ton Raoul et passez un bon Noël tous les deux.

Raoul

Imp. Dauvissat — Paris

Port Said 11 December 1934

My dear,

Attached is the referral voucher as well as the 100 francs that I am sending you for your toiletries. You see that I am nice when you have been good. And if you love your little man, there will never be anything too beautiful for you.

My love again and I hope you both have a merry Christmas.

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

Paquebot " LOTUS "

1898 10.000 Fcs 142m x (Ex Tonkin) démoli 1932

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

CARTE POSTALE

Imp. Daurissat, Paris

COLLECTION CL. DE VILLERMONT

12 SEPT 1950

12 September 1950

1898
10000 tonnes
142 m (ex Tonkin)
demolished 1932

PUBLICATIONS DE LA COUR PERMANENTE DE JUSTICE INTERNATIONALE

SÉRIE A — N° 10

Le 7 septembre 1927

RECUEIL DES ARRÊTS

AFFAIRE DU «LOTUS»

PUBLICATIONS OF THE PERMANENT COURT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE.

SERIES A.—No. 10

September 7th, 1927

COLLECTION OF JUDGMENTS

THE CASE OF THE S.S. "LOTUS"

↑ The first page of the judgment of the Permanent Court of International Justice in the *Lotus Case* (France v. Turkey).

Postscript for International Lawyers

The *Lotus* postcards introduce us to passengers on deck, sending news home, describing landscapes, delays, weather, health, and family matters. They show us the ordinary rhythms of travel and correspondence. They also show us how the macro currents of history affected the lives of those travelling on board. But do they also tell us something that is of importance specifically to us, as students, practitioners, teachers, or researchers of international law? At first sight, there is little reason to think so. The cards do not mention the collision of 2 August 1926 or the subsequent dispute between France and Turkey. The closest we come to learning something about French-Turkish relations is the report of a Turkish raid in one of the cards (p. 273). None of the postcards refer to Lieutenant Demons, captain Hasan Bey, or the Turkish sailors who died that night. Anyone reading the *Lotus* postcards with the aim of gaining doctrinal insights into flag state jurisdiction, territoriality, or the *Lotus Principle* will be disappointed.

But engaging with the postcards as international lawyers is meaningful nonetheless because they

help us hone our sense of time and space, become aware of and calibrate our own positionality, and because they remind us of our professional responsibilities by making the contingent nature of international law apparent.

International lawyers need a good sense of time because international law changes infrequently and slowly. As a result, many of the legal norms and principles we handle emerged decades, sometimes centuries or even millennia, ago. This is not always obvious since textbooks, cases, or treaties often present the norms they contain as timeless. Ordinarily, the key question is whether a norm is valid and applicable, not how old it is. And yet, a norm's age matters. It can support a norm's authority in cases where age can be seen as evidence of the consistent and widespread support the norm enjoys. It can undermine a norm's authority when the time at which it emerged was one shaped by social, political, religious, or other convictions that we now consider outdated or even immoral. In order to assess a norm's authority, one needs to have an appreciation of a norm's age and of the conditions prevailing at the time of its emergence. With respect to the *Lotus Principle*, the postcards help us get a sense of the principle's age. The sepia tone of the cards, the depicted motifs, the style of the handwriting, the black and white photographs, and that we are dealing with

postcards and not tweets or emails, clearly indicate that the postcards and, with them, the *Lotus Principle*, hail from a different era. The principle's age does not necessarily call its plausibility into question, but a profound understanding of it and the factors that conditioned its emergence requires an understanding of the prevailing social and political circumstances in the early twentieth century, and the postcards help us gain just that. The same is, of course, true also for other international legal concepts, norms, principles, and treaties, such as *pacta sunt servanda*, *uti possidetis iuris*, or the UN Charter.

International lawyers also need a high degree of spatial awareness. Just as legal documents present legal norms and principles as timeless, they also tend to present them as placeless (though treaties, at least, are often named after the cities in which they were concluded). The *Lotus Principle* applies everywhere, but it did not emerge everywhere. It emerged in the context of a very particular geopolitical configuration: a world and, in particular, a European continent, emerging slowly from the ruins of the most global war humanity had experienced to date. Relations between the victorious powers, including France, and those who were defeated, including the Ottoman Empire and, by extension, the newly established Turkish Republic, were strained. If global

initiatives like the League of Nations were to have any success, the relationship between victors, defeated powers, and emerging states had to be negotiated with care. The *Lotus* postcards, along with the other texts reproduced in this volume, remind us that international law always unfolds in concrete settings. Had the collision occurred between two closely aligned states, for example, the accident might not have resulted in legal proceedings and might instead have been resolved through diplomatic channels. Conversely, had the collision occurred between powers marked by an even starker imbalance, one state might simply have imposed its view of the matter on the other. By drawing our attention to the French influence in the Mediterranean and beyond, the postcards and their messages connect us not only to the time of the early twentieth century, but also give us an idea of the geopolitical layout of the time.

A consequence of becoming aware of the time and space at which the *Lotus Principle* emerged is that we also become aware of our own time and space. Depending on who, when, and where we are, the 1920s and the Mediterranean might seem very long ago and very far away. For some, cities like Marseille, Alexandria, Jaffa, Beirut, or Istanbul may be home or close to home, part of family history, travel, memory, study, or loss. For others, they may be distant or anonymous, accessible only

through maps, travel blogs, or imagination. In this sense, the postcards do not simply tell us where the *Lotus* and her passengers travelled. They also help us locate ourselves. They sharpen our awareness of our own positionality by inviting us to reflect on the intellectual, geographical, linguistic, professional, and institutional positions from which we read them and from which we read international law. This is important, because just as we approach the postcards at particular times and in particular places, we also approach international law from somewhere and at some point. We read, teach, interpret, and practise international law from particular vantage points, at particular moments in time, with particular inheritances and privileges. For international lawyers, this matters because awareness of our positionality brings with it an awareness of the defeasibility of our own views. It reminds us that our interpretation of a rule, a case, a principle, or a historical episode may be partial. There are other perspectives that international law reflects only imperfectly, or not at all.

To truly understand international law and how it affects, liberates, and restricts the lives of individual human beings, we must attempt to empathise with and take the perspectives of others. We must learn to look at events through the eyes of everyone who travels on the *Lotus*: the princess and the stoker,

the pilgrims and the sex workers, the journalists and the deckhands, and the countless others whose experiences may differ from our own. For example, if we want to assess the conduct of the French soldier who was about to join the quasi-colonial administration of Syria and Lebanon (p. 293), asking what we would have done in his situation is a helpful way of understanding and evaluating the choices he had and the decisions he took. Realising that he was not only an agent of violence, but also a person with a family, a sister, and worries of his own, might cause us to look at him with more kindness. Or it might cause us to judge him more harshly, precisely because, as a human being with family and feelings, he would have been able to understand the pain that his actions might cause others. Our understanding of another's perspective will always remain partial and imperfect. We rarely succeed in capturing another person's perspective adequately and, in any event, no single perspective can ever capture the whole. But the attempt to move between perspectives, however incomplete, remains essential. Each viewpoint enriches our understanding of international law, and ultimately, of the world and of the spaces we inhabit together.

A second consequence of engaging with the time and space of the *Lotus* postcards is that we are reminded of the contingency of the material world

and, by extension, of the norms that we make to govern it. Objects like the postcards represent certain ideas and worldviews, and their unique manifestation and configuration make it easy for us to realise that objects are the way they are because someone chose to make them in this way. A postcard does not simply exist, write itself, and get delivered. Humans made, wrote, carried, sorted, and delivered it for specific reasons. A message could have been written differently, or not at all, sent elsewhere, got lost, or been destroyed. A legal dispute could have been settled diplomatically, framed differently, named differently, or decided otherwise. Just as objects reflect the intentions and choices of people, international law is shaped by the preferences of those who make it. The UN system and the many specialised treaties governing anything from the delivery of luggage to the use of freshwater resources were willed into existence for specific reasons. Engaging with and studying the postcards can be an invitation to reflect not only on the people who created and handled these objects, but also on those who create and apply international law.

The world we encounter through the *Lotus* postcards illustrates this point particularly well. Unlike us, for example, the people writing, travelling, working, administering, waiting, and

hoping in the 1920s would not have referred to their time as the 'interwar' period. That label was imposed later. They were living in the postwar years. The 1920s could have marked the beginning of more peaceful times. They could have inaugurated a more just international order. They could have produced a different relationship between Europe and the Middle East, between former empires, mandates, and newly independent states, between majority populations and ethnic or religious minorities. But that is not what happened. For a wide variety of reasons, the postwar years became the 'interwar' period. This development was not inevitable. Human decision-makers, often counselled by international lawyers, willed the legal and political arrangements that led to the Second World War into existence. The same is true of international law today. Human decision-makers determine what's settled and what's not, what's central and what isn't. They decide what's lawful and what isn't.

As international lawyers, we have the ability and responsibility to influence how these developments unfold. Few of us explicitly make or enforce international law. But we study alongside, teach, train, and advise those who do. We represent states in legal proceedings, negotiate treaties, draft submissions, propose reforms, write expert opinions, sit on committees, shape

curricula, and decide which cases and concepts future lawyers will learn to remember. That is a form of power. It may be indirect, but it is real. The *Lotus* reminds us that this power carries responsibilities. When making, teaching, studying or critiquing international law, we must keep in mind all travellers on the *Lotus*, not only the visible and privileged, not only the officers, diplomats, judges, and statesmen, but also, and especially, those whose labour made the voyage possible and whose lives left fewer traces.

In light of the colourful, complicated, and consequential lives of the *Lotus*, there is a risk that this book's account of the ship and its passengers could be taken to suggest that the *Lotus* was a unique vessel without which the world would look very different. The *Lotus* was unique, of course, but not in that sense. Many ships carried passengers, soldiers, workers, pilgrims, goods, and letters across the Mediterranean and beyond. Many objects can open portals to other times and places. The point is not that the *Lotus* is singular. The point is that she is exemplary. The story of the *Lotus* illustrates how we can access wider webs of things and people through an object, a vessel, a route, a postcard, a micro-story.

In fact, the only hope we have of understanding anything about the world is by engaging with its

micro parts. It is futile to try to understand the world or international law only in the abstract or in general. The world is too dense and international law is too entangled. We understand them by moving between abstraction and concreteness, between rule and life, between doctrine and object, between judgment and postcard. We understand it one constitutive part at a time: one ship, one route, one port, one message, one passenger. Seen in this light, the *Lotus* postcards point us towards what may be the true *Lotus Principle*: the proposition that everything is connected. Things and people do not exist in isolation. Our existence is structured as a dense web of relations, causes, effects, movements, and dependencies.

The *Lotus* did not merely carry passengers from one port to another. She connected families, empires, legal orders, labour regimes, postal systems, commercial routes, military administrations. She moved across waters in which law, commerce, memory, and violence were and are entangled. Pain felt in one part of such an entangled web of relations will eventually be felt elsewhere. Injustice tolerated in one place rarely remains confined to that place. It travels through trade, migration, resentment, imitation, legal doctrine, and political consequence. So too do care, restraint, and accountability.

The collision between the *Lotus* and the *Boz-Kourt* became a diplomatic dispute. The diplomatic dispute became a case. The case became a principle. The principle became a classroom formula. The formula shaped generations of international legal thought. A night at sea became part of the architecture of a discipline. Today, that fateful night at sea invites us to venture away from the polished surface of international legal norms and towards the concrete lives of the people whom international law is ultimately meant to serve.

The postcards do not tell us how to resolve every, or indeed any, doctrinal controversy generated by the *Lotus Case*. They do not answer the question of jurisdiction. They do not tell us whether the PCIJ was right or wrong. But they do something else. They return the case to the world. They give the ship back its decks, its routes, its passengers, its workers, its letters, its sea, its ports, and its historical moment. They remind us that international law is never only a matter of rules made by states. It is also a matter of human lives moving through time and space, unequally exposed to law's protections and law's unfulfilled promises. To engage with the *Lotus* postcards is therefore not to turn away from international law. It is to look at international law more closely.

↑ A selection of the envelopes in which the postcards featured in this book were sent to me.

About the Postcards

I collected the postcards reproduced in this volume over several years from a wide variety of sources and locations. I acquired my first *Lotus* postcard in 2013 and began collecting in earnest in 2018.

Initially, I focused on gathering all known postcard motifs of the ship's exterior and interior. Upon learning that the *Lotus* had previously sailed under the name *Tonkin*, I expanded the scope of the collection to include postcards from the ship's first life.

Incidentally, the inclusion of postcards from the first life of the *Lotus* allows readers to observe the transformation of the postcard as a medium. Originally, one side of the card was reserved entirely for the address, while both image and message had to share the front. From ca. 1906 onwards, the written message regularly occupied at least half of the reverse side, allowing more space for the image on the front.

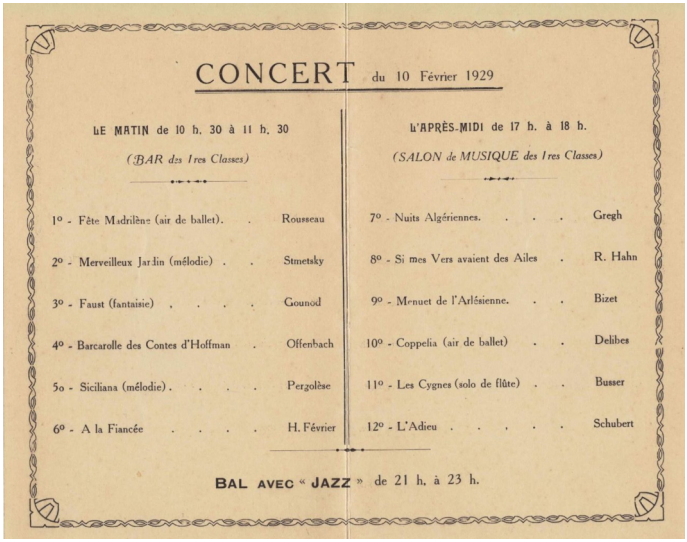
Once I had collected all available motifs of the *Lotus* and the *Tonkin*, I concentrated exclusively on acquiring postcards carrying written messages.

I found and purchased the majority of the postcards and images featured in this book online through websites specialising in collectables and postcards, including Delcampe, Ebay, and Ansichtskartenversand. Most sellers were based in France, although some postcards also reached me from the United States, Italy, Belgium, and Germany. During a visit to Marseille and La Ciotat in autumn 2023, I also found a few postcards at local flea markets.

The originals of most postcards and images reproduced in this volume are now held in the *Lotus Collection* at the Museum of International Law. To keep this book to a reasonable length, I could only include a selection. I aimed to provide a representative sample of the collection, reflecting its geographical range, the variety of correspondents, and the different kinds of messages they conveyed.

By default, the translated messages are accompanied by a digitised image of one side of the corresponding postcard, reproduced at the original size. However, when the sender explicitly refers to the picture on the front of the card, I have included images of both sides.

Beyond the postcards reproduced in this volume, the *Lotus Collection* at the Museum of



CONCERT du 10 Février 1929

LE MATIN de 10 h. 30 à 11 h. 30

(BAR des 1res Classes)

1° - Fête Madrilène (air de ballet).	.	Rousseau
2° - Merveilleux Jardin (mélodie) .	.	Stmetsky
3° - Faust (fantaisie)		Gounod
4° - Barcarolle des Contes d'Hoffman	.	Offenbach
5o - Siciliana (mélodie)		Pergolèse
6° - A la Fiancée		H. Février

L'APRÈS-MIDI de 17 h. à 18 h.

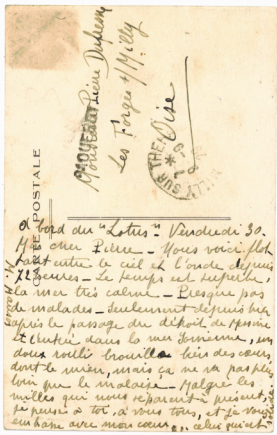
(SALON de MUSIQUE des 1res Classes)

7° - Nuits Algériennes. . . .		Gregh
8° - Si mes Vers avaient des Ailes	.	R. Hahn
9° - Menuet de l'Arlésienne. . .		Bizet
10° - Coppelia (air de ballet) . .		Delibes
11° - Les Cygnes (solo de flûte) . .		Busser
12° - L'Adieu		Schubert

BAL AVEC « JAZZ » de 21 h. à 23 h.

↑ Programme of the *Lotus* orchestra on 10 February 1929. From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

International Law in Lund includes dinner menus, onboard newspapers, concert programmes, logbooks, and many other objects connected to the social and material life of the vessel and its passengers. Visitors are welcome to consult these materials. I am currently preparing an edited collection of the ship's logbooks for publication.



On the Lotus 30 March

M. Pierre Dafresse
Les Forges / Milly
Oise

My dear Pierre

Here we are, floating between the sky and the waves for 72 hours. The weather is superb, the sea is very calm. Almost no one is sick. Only yesterday, during our passage from the strait of Messina upon entry in the Ionian sea, some soft waves troubled some spirits, including mine, but that was nothing more than a little seasickness. Despite the miles that now separate us, I am thinking of you, of all of you, and I embrace you with all my heart, ~~which remains~~ solid.

the one which do

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	File Name	Date (from f	Location (St	Location (M	Recipient of post card (Address)	Message Text
2			Location img	Location of t	Address of the post card's recipient	
3	2005	1900-01-00	Marseille		Mr. and Mrs Laucelin9 Rue Faravay	Marseille, Sunday morning. That's it; I settled down on board the "Toukik" in a very large room with three be
4	2030	0	N/A	N/A	Miss Céline CharlinBakeryBrignoles	To my daughter,My sweetest thoughts.Warm wishes, [Signature]
5	2050	0	N/A	Beirut	N/A	[Card starts abruptly here]: the sum to return, otherwise we'll never see the end of it. It's like when someone
6	2055	0	On the Lotus	N/A	Miss Yvonne DuclosrPlace de la M	The best wishes from your friend who leaves to undertake a great journey. I hope to arrive in port soon. I beli
7	2080	0	N/A	Alexandria	N/A	It seems I was particularly lucky in getting to share my journey with the Lotus: other ships are far inferior to it
8	2120	0	N/A	N/A	Mr. EliasResiding with Mr. Dufan a	On my way back to France.[signature]
9	2125	0	N/A	N/A	Mademoiselle Delabage37 Avenue	Happy memories, G. d' Audré
10	2135	0	N/A	N/A	Marseille	Dear Hélène, I am sending you a picture of the vessel we will be boarding. We were meant to board today, bu
11	2195	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	A souvenir from your André who loves you. André who embraces his sweet and dear mother with all his heart
12	03-1902 - 04	1900-01-00	Bordeaux, G	N/A	Mr. Pierre de la Blanchetais18 rue	My best wishes, from your godfather.
13	2155	00-21/08/--	Cournon	Cournon	Madame Le Pasteur SaltetLacaune	Cournon, on August 21Dear Madame, I received your letter with great pleasure. I am happy of the good new
14	3219	000-03-30	Milly-sur-Th	On the Lotus	M. Pierre DafresseLes Forges / Mill	On the Lotus - Friday, 30 March at PierreHere we are, floating between the sky and the waves for 72 hours. T
15	9000.2	0000-00-00	N/A		N/A	When I get there, I will send you the address by telegram so that you will be informed earlier of my arrival in t
16	3022-3023	1905-02-28	Marseille	Red Sea	Miss R. Le Breton2 Carrefour de la	Red Sea, February 28, 1909142 metres long, my ship - Paris is so far already!
17	3024-3025	1905-08-18	Bordeaux	Bordeaux	Mr. Joseph Fourteau, BakerLannes	Front: An "x" and the words "my cabin"Back: Dear parents, from Lannes to Bordeaux the trip was excellent.
18	3031-3032	1906-08-15	Figeac	N/A	Mr. Ernest ViolarTapissier in front	Before we begin our journey, sending you a souvenir. Give my well wishes to your parents for their good healt
19	3037-3038	1907-02-02	Yokohama/P	Port Said	Madame de Laeraudval Plazac thr	Very good journey during two days, then a tame storm that will end only tomorrow, once we arrive in Port Sa
20	3039-3040	1907-05-12	N/A	Marseille	Mis Suzanne Martel Villa Margot H	Front: Le Giotat, 12-9-07, JacquesBack: Dear Suz, I arrived in Marseille safely yesterday and today, having dise
21	3047-3048	1907-12-30	Valserres	N/A	Mr and Miss ArthaudMalcor next t	Happy new year, wishing everyone good health and a joyful first day of the year. Jules
22	3059-3060	1910-03-27	Fontaines-Su	N/A	Miss Thérèse GauchonHôtel de la F	Thousand kisses, [Signature]
23	3063-3064	1910-06-29	Marseille	Haiphong	Mr. Leopold CalazelMechanical Qu	Travelled on the Tonkin: Marseille to HaiphongMay 22, 1910 to June 21, 1910See you next Wednesday.[Signa
24	3061-3062	1910-08-29	N/A	N/A	N/A	My dear little Jean, I hope that you will take advantage of the end of your stay at St. Quay, despite the depart
25	3073-3074	1911-08-27	Vendeuvre-s	N/A	Miss Paule Nibaultwith her parents	My dear Paule, Thousands of thanks for your kind letter. I don't know if I have deserved them, but I will be hap
26	3077-3078	1911-12-04	Gueugnon,	Saône-et-Loire	Madame MoreauGrande RueGueu	3-12-1911 Ship boarded! We have a good cabin. We were almost delayed by a month. No such luck. We being
27	3086	1913-03-11	Alexandria	N/A	Monsieur R. DeygasPainter191 rue	Dear friend and brotherHad a beautiful crossing on the ship at the back. I will bring you the full collection of p
28	3089-3090	1913-08-12	Naples	N/A	Mrs and Mr. WallaertChâlet des Ac	On 12-8-13 at 9 in the morningHope to arrive on Thursday under the good auspices of God and Mother Natur
29	3102	1914-10-14	N/A	Alexandria	Madame Villa Ortesci 13Cour Laus	Dear friend, Thank you for your letter. I have three days off and if the weather and God permit it, I will be cor
30	3103-3104	1915-12-28	Marseille	N/A	Family Toren Flos-Hénon40 Rue de	Hello to everyone from Marseille. Aboard the Lotus leaving for Egypt.Joseph Meder
31	3107-3108	1916-04-09	N/A	Port Said	N/A	Port Said, April 9, 1916.Dear Mr. Schneider,We've had some incredibly rotten luck. Thankfully, it arrived upon
32	3111-3112	1917-01-03	N/A	Marseille	N/A	Marseille, January 3, 1917Dear Parents, Here we are at port. We have boarded and I am sending you a pictur
33	3113	1917-01-04	N/A	N/A	N/A	4-1-17Very dear sister in law , I didn't get the honour of meeting you and we must hope that it shall happen soon and t
34	3119	1918-04-17	N/A	Camp Delon	N/A	Dear JeanetteHere I am, it's been two days that I'm on French soil. The trip was not too eventful, my health is
35	3120	1918-06-15	N/A	N/A	N/A	15 June '18Aby, dear SisterThe great departure is set for tonight. The weather is wonderful. I hope to have a p
36	3123-3124	1918-12-18	N/A	N/A	N/A	December 18, 1918Dear cousins,I am back at my base for two days already and it's really nothing like civil life.
37	3130	1919-08-06	Marseille	On the Lotus	Monsieur MaisomenadeÉcole Norr	6 August '19Dear Ninette, dear parentsI am writing to you from aboard the Lotus that will leave in just a few
38	3130,5	06-Oct-19	N/A	Marseille	N/A	Dear Mother and Father,My day was quite full, as you will be able to attest: this morning, I went aboard the L
39	2193-W-000	1919-11-03	N/A	Marseille	N/A	Dear friend, I have finally arrived, although the weather has not been good. It's very cold here. I hope that yo
40	3131	1920-03-17	N/A	Marseille	N/A	FRONT: I hope the sea will be good and the Lotus willing to cooperate. BACK: Dear mother, Here I am, soon a
41	3134	1920-03-26	Marseille	Marseille	Madame L. Peythieu63 Cours St. A	[Marseille] on 25/3/1920We just spent a wonderful day. I have a new suit that I think you'll like. There is no ne
42	3135-3136	1920-04-19	N/A	N/A	N/A	My man Loulou,I had embarked the Mt Pehoulle, but there is so much wind that the ship was unable to leave
43	3137,5	1920-06-28	N/A	On the Lotus	Monseiur and Madame J. VrecinRo	FRONT: My cabin is somewhere around here. BACK: On the Lotus, on 28 June 1920Stunning passage, splendid

↑ The 'back-end' of the process behind the creation of this book.

About the Translations

Unless otherwise indicated, translations of all texts not originally written in English were prepared under my auspices over the course of eight years. In most cases, the translations involved three rounds of correction and proofreading. The process was often complicated by illegible handwriting. Readers who notice errors or questionable interpretations of handwritten terms are encouraged to contact me.

Signatures and names of senders have only been transcribed where they are exceptionally clear; by default, they have been omitted to avoid misattributing messages. Place and country names have been reproduced as they were used at the time of writing. Occasionally, punctuation and certain expressions have been lightly adjusted to improve readability and flow. Obvious errors, such as '200h' instead of '2000h' or 'Bolling Green' instead of 'Bowling Green', were corrected.

While various spellings of the name of the Turkish boat that collided with the *Lotus* exist, this book adopts *Boz-Kourt*, following the usage of the Permanent Court of International Justice.

↑ Two photographs of the *Lotus* in February 1926. From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

Acknowledgements

This book owes its existence to the assistance of a large circle of *Lotus* friends and colleagues. I thank Serde Atalay, Federica Paddeu, and Daniel Peat for helping me coordinate the Lotus 100 project, which brought together more than 100 international lawyers for 10 workshops. I thank, in particular, the attendees of the November 2025 session, at which I presented drafts of this book.

I am very grateful to Laurianne Allezard, Serde Atalay, Laurie Maher, Sophie Duroy, Blandine Garot-Jacquey and Silvia Steininger for helping prepare translations of the postcard messages. I also thank Laurianne, Laurie, and Charlie Guérit, for proofreading the final selection of postcards.

I thank Alma Bergqvist, Emilija Branda, and Malin Gustafsson for assisting with the digital reproduction of the postcards and with the increasingly difficult task of archiving the collection. I thank Alezini Loxa and Irina Kalinka for helping me procure a number of *Lotus* postcards from the United States.

I thank the Rune and Lena Lavin Foundation for helping to finance the printed version of this book.

I thank Gunilla Albertén, Jonas Palm, and the team at Media-Tryck in Lund for accompanying the project and production process with patience and enthusiasm despite my many unusual requests.

My interest in the *Lotus* is driven by a curiosity about the lives, thoughts, and experiences of different people at different moments in time and under different circumstances. To truly understand international law (and life), we must attempt to empathise with and take the perspectives of those others with whom we share a time and place. It was my three younger siblings, Anemone, Benedikt, and Jonathan, who, by virtue of their very existence, first confronted me with the perspectival nature of reality. It is often said that older siblings may find it difficult to adjust to the arrival of younger ones because their needs, interests, and wishes seem to compete with their own and make the world the older sibling can claim smaller. The opposite is true. With every new perspective, the world becomes larger, more complex, and more meaningful. I am very grateful to my siblings for helping me gain this insight and for continuing to travel through life with me.

This book is dedicated to them.

↑ Stern of the *Lotus*. From the collection of the Museum of International Law.

Love letters, travel updates, expressions of grief, boredom, excitement, and longing: this book brings together more than 150 postcards written by passengers aboard the Lotus, a French liner that connected Marseille with the great ports of the eastern Mediterranean between 1898-1931. Written by pilgrims and poets, soldiers and scholars, royals and revolutionaries, the messages offer rare glimpses into everyday life during one of the most transformative periods of modern history.

An afterword explores the ship's enduring legal legacy as the namesake of international law's famous Lotus Case of 1927.

Printed by Media-Tryck, Lund 2026 NORDIC SWAN ECOLABEL 3041 0903

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